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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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MARKETS BLEED. BLACK MONDAY 2.0?

Investors lose Rs 14Lcr; many fear Black Monday-like loss, when global mkt crashed in 1987

Cramer, an American market commentator, said that if Trump doesn't pull back on tariffs or at least reward countries that play fair, we might see a crash as bad as in 1987's Black Monday, when markets collapsed without warning.

INVESTORS NOW POORER BY
₹ 14 lakh crore

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty logged their worst single-day decline in 10 months, as fears that Trump's policies on reciprocal tariffs may lead to recession and higher inflation in the US going ahead unnerved investors.

With Monday's sharp fall, the benchmark indices suffered one of their worst declines in five years.

In a horrible day for investors, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex tanked 2,226.79 points, or 2.95 per cent, to settle at 73,137.90. During the day, the benchmark index slumped 3,939.68 points, or 5.22 per cent, to 71,425.01.

The NSE Nifty tumbled 742.85 points, or 3.24 per cent, to settle at 22,161.60. Intra-day, the benchmark dropped 1,160.8 points, or 5.06 per cent, to 21,743.65.

Dalal Street investors were a poorer lot as their wealth eroded sharply by Rs 14 lakh crore.

Prior to Monday's debacle, on 4 June last year, the Sensex nosedived 4,389.73 points, or 5.74 per cent, to close at 72,079.05.

Sensex and Nifty had previously tumbled over 13 per cent on March 23, 2020 when lockdown was im-posed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

On 6 April, 2025, Jim Selling pressure was rampant across the board as all BSE sectoral indices ended with deep cuts. Metal tumbled 6.22 per cent, realty dropped 5.69 per cent, commodities (4.68 per cent), industrials (4.57 per cent), consumer discretionary (3.79 per cent), auto (3.77 per cent), bankex (3.37 per cent), IT (2.92 per cent), teck (2.85 per cent), and BSE-Focused IT (2.63 per cent).

All Sensex firms, except for Hindustan Unilever, ended lower. Tata Steel fell the most by 7.73 per cent followed by Larsen & Toubro which cracked 5.78 per cent.

Tata Motors, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Infosys, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, HCL Technolo-gies and HDFC Bank were the other big laggards. —*PTI*

Tariffs knock the lights out of Wall Street & global markets

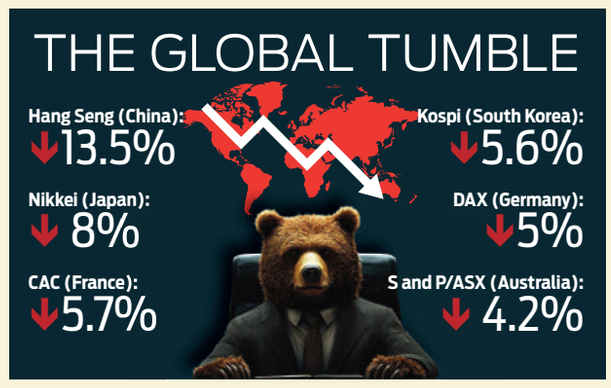
NEW YORK, 7 APRIL

Wall Street is careening through a shocking day of trading Monday, catapulting from an early drop that had dragged it 20 per cent below its record to a sudden rise, only to revert to losses as worries remain about whether President Donald Trump's trade war will torpedo the global economy.

The S and P 500 went from a 4.7 per cent drop shortly after the start of trading all the way to a surge of 3.4 per cent, a gain that would have counted as its best day in years.

It then quickly gave up all of it to revert to a drop of 1.3 per cent, as of 10:30 a.m. Eastern time.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 736 points, or 1.9 per cent, and the Nasdaq composite was 1.3 per cent lower. Both also whipped through intense reversals, with the Dow going from a loss of 1,700 points to a gain of nearly 900 points.



Global stock markets too with Germany's DAX plummeting 6.5 per cent, the CAC 40 shedding 5.7 per cent, and the FTSE 100 falling 4.5 per cent.

US President Donald Trump reiterated his stance on tariffs, stating that while he did not want market declines, "sometimes you have to take medicine to fix something".

The Tokyo Nikkei 225 index lost nearly 8 per cent, with major companies like Mizuho Financial and Mitsubishi UFJ seeing stocks drop over 10 per cent. In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng dropped 13.5%, and Alibaba and Tencent saw significant losses. Chinese stocks also fell, with the Shanghai Composite down 7.3 per cent.

Oil prices plunged, with US crude dipping to $59.17 per barrel. The US dollar weakened against the yen, a traditional safe haven. —*PTI*

Molestations happen in cities: Parameshwara

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

A big city like Bengaluru does witness incidents like molestation of women here and there though there is peace in the City due to police presence, Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Monday.

In the wake of the alleged molestation of a woman, he said whenever such an incident happens, it draws public attention.

The Minister said he gives instructions to the Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda on a daily basis to strengthen patrolling and monitoring system.

He was responding to the incident where a woman was molested in a secluded place in Suddaguntepal-ya. —*PTI*

>>>MORE ON PAGE 2

Waqf protest: Manipur BJP man's home torched

IMPHAL, 7 APRIL

An alleged mob of 7,000-8,000 set Manipur BJP Minority Morcha President Asker Ali's house on fire on Sunday over his support for the Waqf (Amendment) Act, officials said. Ali had expressed his support for the Act on social media on Saturday. Following the incident, Ali posted a video on social media on Sunday, apologising for his earlier statement. He also expressed opposition to the Act. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

Rana's last plea against extradition to India rejected

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The US Supreme Court has rejected 26/11 Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana's appeal seeking a stay on his extradition to India, moving him closer to being handed over to Indian authorities to face justice. Rana, 64, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, is currently lodged at a metropolitan detention centre in Los Angeles. He is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 attacks. Rana had submitted an 'Emergency Application For Stay Pending Litigation of Petition For Writ of Habeas Corpus' on 27 February, 2025. Earlier last month, the judge had denied the application. —*PTI*

Karnataka II PUC results to be declared today

BENGALURU, 07 APRIL

The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) will announce the results of the 2024–25 Second Year Pre-University (II PUC) exams on Tuesday, 8 April. Minister for School Education, Madhu Bangarappa, will formally declare the results at 12.30pm, with students able to access them online from 1.30pm at karresults.nic.in. Results will also be sent via SMS to registered mobile numbers. Around 7.13 lakh students, including 3.35 lakh boys and 3.78 lakh girls, appeared for the exams held from 1 to 20 March at 1,172 centres across Karnataka. —***Salar News***

LPG price up ₹50, duty hiked on petrol, diesel

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The government has increased the price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by Rs 50 per cylinder, effective 8 April, 2025. This decision affects both Ujjwala scheme beneficiaries, who receive LPG con-nections at no cost, and general users. Prices for Ujjwala users will now be Rs 553 for a 14.2-kg cylinder, while general users will pay Rs 853.

Simultaneously, an excise duty of Rs 2 per litre has been imposed on petrol and diesel, although this will not affect retail prices due to adjustments following a drop in international oil rates. The excise duty on petrol increases from Rs 11 to Rs 13 per litre, while diesel rises from Rs 8 to Rs 10. Consequently, the total excise burden on petrol rises to Rs 21.9 per litre and diesel to Rs 17.80 per litre.

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri highlighted a 63 per cent increase in the average Saudi CP price, now at USD 629 per tonne, necessitating the price adjustment as public sector oil companies have faced losses of Rs 41,338 crore by selling LPG below cost.

> **Prime Minister Narendra Modi has exposed the hypocrisy of the so-called 'Janaakrosha Yatre' launched by BJP leaders in Karnataka, by increasing the prices of petrol, diesel, and cooking gas himself**
>
> —Siddaramaiah, CM

Despite the hike, Puri assured that LPG usage remains affordable, costing approximately Rs 6.10 per day for Ujjwala households.

The government plans to review prices monthly to ensure consumers benefit from any potential decreases in international rates.

This excise duty hike is expected to generate significant revenue to offset the losses faced by oil marketing firms. Currently, petrol and diesel prices in Delhi stand at Rs 94.77 and Rs 87.67 per litre, respec-tively. —*PTI*

DMK MOVES COURT TOO

AIMPLB opposes Waqf Bill in SC

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) and Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind have approached the Su-preme Court, challenging the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025.

The DMK and Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi too challenged the Waqf Bill.

Till now more than 10 petitions have been filed in the top court challenging the validity of the Act

The petitions asserts that the Act is arbitrary, discriminatory, and infringes upon Muslims' fundamental rights, particularly under Articles 25 and 26 of the Indian Constitution, which guarantee religious free-dom and the right to manage religious institutions.

Meanwhile, Supreme Court on Monday agreed to consider listing for urgent hearing the petitions chal-lenging the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025.

The controversial amendments, which President Droupadi Murmu assented to on 5 April, seek to over-haul the administration of Waqf properties, enhancing government control over these assets. The peti-tion argues that the law deprives Muslims of the autonomy to manage their own religious endowments and introduces discriminatory measures, such as requiring donors to be practising Muslims for five years. Furthermore, the Act undermines Islamic Shariah principles and favours non-Muslim members on the Waqf Boards, which the petitioners argue compromises the religious significance of Waqf.

Maulana Arshad Madani, President of Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, labelled the law a "dangerous conspiracy" to strip Muslims of their religious rights. He also criticised the government for sidelining Muslims in key po-sitions within the Waqf administration. Several opposition leaders, including Asaduddin Owaisi and Ama-natullah Khan, have expressed solidarity with the petitioners. —*PTI*

>>>More on Pages 2 & 3

People protest against the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, at Freedom Park, in Bengaluru on Monday ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

SC raps UP cops for turning civil cases into criminal ones

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The Supreme Court Monday pulled up the Uttar Pradesh Police for filing criminal charges in what it said was primarily a civil dispute for allegedly not returning Rs 25 lakh borrowed from a person.

Supreme Court said there was a "complete breakdown of rule of law in Uttar Pradesh".

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan was irked after a lawyer said the FIR was filed as civil disputes take a long time to settle.

"This is wrong what is happening in Uttar Pradesh. Everyday civil suits are being converted to criminal cases. It is absurd, merely not giving money cannot be turned into an offence," the CJI said. —*PTI*

BAN ON 13 OTHER COUNTRIES TOO

Ahead of Hajj, Saudi bans visas for India

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has imposed new travel restrictions, suspending the issuance of certain visas to people of 14 countries including Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, as per reports.

However, the suspension does not impact pilgrims from India who are travelling to Saudi Arabia strictly for Hajj and have secured Hajj visas. Pilgrims holding valid Hajj permits or intending to procure one will be allowed to enter Mecca and Medina and participate in the pilgrimage as planned. The suspension is on the issuance of Umrah, business, and family visit visas till mid-June when the pilgrimage concludes, for 14 countries to prevent unauthorised individuals from performing Hajj without proper registration and avoid overcrowding.

Pilgrims holding valid Hajj permits will be allowed to enter Mecca and Medina ***PHOTO: PIXABAY***

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman has ordered authorities to ensure stricter visa regula-tion enforcements so that the country can conduct a smooth and secure Hajj pilgrimage.

Reportedly, individuals from foreign countries will be issued visit visas or Umrah visas till April 13 as part of the new initiative. After that, no new visa will be issued to anyone from the 14 countries including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Nigeria, Jordan, Algeria, Sudan, Ethiopia, Tunisia, Yemen. No-tably, the decision comes after the tragedy during the 2024 Hajj pilgrimage, where over 1,000 people, due to overcrowding and heat were killed in the event, many of whom were unauthorized pilgrims. Saudi Arabia now reportedly has taken visa ban as a preventive measure. —*PTI*

23 UP men allegedly kidnap, drug & rape teen for 7 days

VARANASI, 7 APRIL

UP Police have registered a case of rape against 23 people for alleged raping a 19-year-old girl in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh over the span of seven days, between 29 March and 4 April.

Out of the 23 accused, six men have been detained by the police so far. According to the police, the girl, studying in class 12, went missing from her home when a friend took her to a hookah bar in the Pishachmochan area of Varanasi on 29 March. She returned home on 4 April and reported the incident to her family, who then contacted the police.

"As per her statement, on 29 March, a friend took her to a hookah bar in the Pishachmochan area, where other men also joined. The girl alleged that she was drugged with a spiked cold drink and then taken to different hotels and places in the Sigra area, where she was gang-raped by different people," a senior police official said.

DCP Varuna Zone, Chandrakant Mina, said on Monday that an FIR was lodged on the complaint of her mother. The charges were filed under section 70(1) (gang rape), 74 (outraging modesty), 123 (administering poison or harmful substance), 126(2) (obstructing movement), 127(2) (wrongful confinement), and 351(2) (criminal intimidation) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against all accused. —*Agencies*

PHOTO: PTI

CM assures Rahul of support to street vendors

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has assured Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of the state government's commitment to the welfare and holistic development of street vendors. This assurance followed concerns raised by Gandhi regarding the conditions faced by these vendors in Karnataka.

In his response, Siddaramaiah highlighted that Karnataka was one of the first states to establish Street Vendors Rules during his previous term as Chief Minister (2013-2018). He noted that a survey of street vendors and elections for Town Vending Committees were conducted for the first time in 2017 and 2019. Although intended to continue in 2022, this process was not realised until the current government resumed power.

He reported that a fresh survey, in accordance with the Street Vendors Act 2014, has been completed, registering 27,655 vendors in Bengaluru. Elections for the Town Vending Committees are scheduled for April 2025.—*Salar News*

Amid rising sewage in lakes, DKS orders GPS for waste trucks

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar directed officials on Monday to prevent the flow of sewage into Bengaluru's lakes and ensure that all lakes are filled with treated water.

Shivakumar, who also holds the Bengaluru Development portfolio, held a meeting to review the progress of lake conservation, waste disposal, and other related works.

"It was decided in the meeting to hand over the responsibility of filling Bengaluru lakes with treated water to the BWSSB. Instructions were also given to all Deputy Commissioners and Zilla Panchayat CEOs to take necessary measures to address potential water shortages," said a statement from the Minister's Office.

Shivakumar instructed BBMP (Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike) officials to fit all vehicles transporting construction waste with GPS tracking devices to monitor their movement and disposal. —*Salar News*

Teacher held for raping 14-year-old in Kalaburagi

KALABURAGI, 7 APRIL

Police on Monday arrested a guest teacher, identified as Shivaraj attached to government high school in Madanahipparaga village in Alanda taluk, allegedly for raping a 14-year-old student. Shivaraj has been working as a teacher on contract basis in the government high school for the past two years. As the school was closed for annual holidays, the teacher allegedly went to the girl's house when she was alone and raped her, police said.

Madanahipparaga police arrested the teacher under POCSO Act. —*Salar News*

Molestations happen in big cities: Parameshwara

BJP calls out Cong leader for misogynist mindset

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

A big city like Bengaluru does witness incidents like molestation of women here and there though there is peace in the City due to police presence, Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Monday.

In the wake of the alleged molestation of a woman, he said whenever such an incident happens, it draws public attention.

The Minister said he gives instructions to the Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda on a daily basis to strengthen patrolling and monitoring system.

He was responding to the incident where a woman was molested in a secluded place in Suddaguntepalya.

Home Minister G Parameshwara PHOTO: PTI

He added that he regularly tells the police commissioner that they have to be alert, the beat system should be followed regularly and monitoring should be enhanced.

According to police, two women were walking in the Bharathi Layout on 3 April when a man approached them and pushed one of them against the wall and molested her.

Meanwhile, BJP demanded that Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra seek Parameshwara's resignation.

BJP National Spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla alleged that Parameshwara is a "serial offender", claiming that he had made similar remarks trivialising crimes against women during sexual assaults against them in in 2017.

- The BJP leader told reporters that Congress leader has exhibited a brazen display of "most shocking, misogynist, patriarchal, sexist and obnoxious mindset" by trivialising an incident that has shocked the country.

The BJP leader told reporters that Congress leader has exhibited a brazen display of "most shocking, misogynist, patriarchal, sexist and obnoxious mindset" by trivialising an incident that has shocked the country. —*PTI*

People protest against the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, at Freedom Park, in Bengaluru on Monday PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Bengaluru protests against Waqf Bill

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

Hundreds of citizens, students, and activists gathered at Freedom Park on Monday, protesting the newly passed Waqf Amendment Act, 2025. Demonstrators condemned the Act as an attack on constitutional rights and community autonomy.

"This bill is a communal strike disguised as reform," BT Venkatesh, Additional Advocate General, told Salar News. "It violates fundamental rights under Articles 14, 25, and 26. The RSS has orchestrated this quietly and now pushed it through," he added.

The amendment, passed last week, grants the government sweeping control over waqf properties, allows non-Muslim members to be on waqf boards, and removes protections like the 'Waqf by User' clause. Critics argue this undermines the traditional system of managing mosques, graveyards, and madrasas.

MK Metri, senior High Court advocate, warned the bill enables the government to seize waqf assets. "It demonises Waqf properties, calling them land hoards. Linking Waqf to claims on Parliament and airports is propaganda, meant to stir hate," he said.

Law student Tahera Khan expressed concern, saying, "We've already witnessed lynchings and mosque demolitions. Now they want to legalise this bias? This is Gandhi's India, not theirs to hijack."

Activist Tanveer Ahmed labelled the Act "a blueprint to seize Muslim heritage," while AISA's Aratrika called it a Right-wing move to erase community rights.

The Bill, which passed in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, received assent from President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday. —*Salar News*

BJP launches 'Janaakrosha Yatre' against price hikes

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

BJP on Monday launched the 'Janaakrosha Yatre' (Public Anger March) from Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's home turf of Mysuru, protesting against a host of issues, including price rise and the four per cent reservation granted to Muslims in government contracts.

The party plans to cover all districts in the state before culminating the yatra in Bengaluru on 4 May, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said while flagging off the march.

Before starting the yatra, Joshi, BJP State President BY Vijayendra, and Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly R Ashoka paid obeisance to Mysuru's presiding deity, Goddess Chamundeshwari.

BY Vijayendra PHOTO: PTI

Several MLAs, MPs, and former ministers, including Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, also joined them.

Speaking to reporters, Joshi alleged that ever since the Congress government came to power in the state, it has been looting the people through various price hikes.

"Registration charges, road tax, and transformer installation costs have gone up. Additionally, the prices of petrol, diesel, milk, and alcohol have also increased," he said.

He further claimed that the four per cent reservation for Muslims in government contracts reflects the Congress's "appeasement politics".

Joshi said the party is consulting legal experts on the Muslim reservation issue to challenge it in court. He added that the Supreme Court has previously struck down religion-based reservations.

—*Salar News with Agencies*

Youth hacked to death in public in Kengeri

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

An unidentified youth was hacked to death by a group of assailants near a restaurant in Banashankari 6th Stage around 10 am on Monday. The crime spot falls within the jurisdiction of the Kengeri police station.

According to police, the victim – aged between 25 and 30 years– was walking past the area when he was attacked by the gang. They hacked him multiple times on the head, limbs and a few other parts and left. He succumbed to his injuries on the spot.

The victim was reportedly wearing a white shirt and blue trousers at the time of the attack. However, his identity is yet to be established. —*Salar News*

Boy goes blind after teacher beats him in Chintamani

CHINTAMANI, 7 APRIL

Batlahalli police in Chintamani taluk of Chikkaballapur district have registered an FIR against the Block Education Officer (BEO) and six teachers after the parents of a six-year-old boy, Yeshwant, lodged a complaint with the police that their son lost vision after suffering eye injury at the school on 6 March, 2024.

The FIR was registered around 10pm after the parents of the boy, along with several villagers and former legislator KM Krishna Reddy held a dharana in front of the police station.

Those who have been named in the FIR are BEO Uma Devi and teachers Saraswathi, Ashok, Narayanaswamy, Sri Rama Reddy and Venkataramana Reddy.

The incident took place at the government primary school in Yagavakote. While Saraswathi is accused of causing the injury, the others are accused of threatening the parents of the boy, said police.

Yeshwant's father Nataraj said that Saraswathi threw a stick at students, which hit Yeshwant in his right eye. The boy was escorted home and his parents were told that there was no need for concern.

Doctors at Victoria Hospital performed two surgeries in December, 2024, but could not resolve the issue. Later doctors at Narayana Netrlaya confirmed that the boy lost his vision permanently. —*Salar News*

Six bills notified after Guv's assent

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

Six bills were notified in the Karnataka gazette on Monday after Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot gave his assent.

The bills, which finally became law after the Governor's nod are The Karnataka Land Revenue (Amendment) Act, Karnataka Land Grabbing Prohibition (Amendment) Act, Karnataka Stamp (Amendment) Act, Karnataka Animal Feed (Regulation of Manufacture and Quality Control) Act, Karnataka Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Act and Dr H Narasimhaiah Science, Educational, Cultural and Tourism Development Authority Act.

The Karnataka Land Grabbing Prohibition (Amendment) Act aims to safeguard the government land and ensure accountability among revenue officials.

It also seeks to introduce a more accurate method for measuring distance while filing cases against encroachment of government lands.

The Karnataka Land Revenue (Amendment) Bill, 2025, aims to give more clarity regarding regularisation of unauthorised cultivation committee constituted in Assembly constituencies, and to introduce a more accurate way of measuring distance while granting land, defining government kharab (waste) land, and using and disposing such land, naming and renaming of revenue areas.

The Karnataka Stamp (Amendment) Act seeks to amend the Act of 1957 to allow digital e-stamping within the ambit of duly stamped documents. —*PTI*

Ranya Rao, associates to stay in jail till 21 April

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

A local court has extended the judicial custody of Kannada actress Ranya Rao, along with businessman Tarun Raju and jewellery dealer Sahil Jain, until 21 April in connection with a gold smuggling investigation.

The trio stands accused of facilitating the illegal importation of over Rs 12.56 crore worth of gold from Dubai to India. The case first emerged on 3 March 2025 when Ranya, also known as Harshavardhani Ranya, was detained at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru with 14.8 kilograms of allegedly smuggled gold.

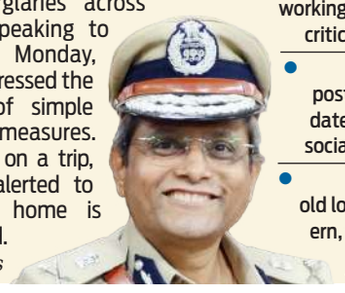
Investigations have revealed that Ranya made 45 solo trips to Dubai between 2023 and 2025, raising concerns about her involvement in a larger smuggling ring. Authorities discovered her connection to Vira Diamonds Trading, a Dubai-based firm she co-founded in 2023 with Raju, who is also known as Virat Konduru.

This establishment is believed to have served as a front for the smuggling operations. —*PTI*

SECURE HOMES BEFORE LEAVING CITY: DAYANANDA

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

With the summer holidays approaching and families preparing to leave the city for vacations, City Police Commissioner B Dayananda has urged people to prioritise home safety before heading out. The advisory follows a spike in burglaries across Bengaluru. Speaking to reporters on Monday, Dayananda stressed the importance of simple preventive measures. "Before going on a trip, citizens are alerted to ensure their home is securely locked. —*Salar News*



SAFETY TIPS

- Secure all doors and windows. Avoid hiding spare keys under doormats or in flower pots.
- If your home has CCTV cameras, confirm that they are working and cover critical areas.
- Avoid posting travel dates or plans on social media.
- Replace old locks with modern, tamper-proof ones.
- Do not lock the main gate as an open gate may suggest someone is at home and discourage thieves.
- Inform newspaper and milk vendors of your absence to prevent piles from accumulating outside.
- Leave a light on inside the house to create the impression that someone is present.
- Store jewellery and other valuable items in bank lockers instead of leaving them at home.
- Consider installing motion sensors, smart locks or alarm systems to prevent break-ins.

Techie found dead in apartment; suicide suspected

BENGALURU, 7 APRIL

A senior employee at a private firm was found dead under suspicious circumstances at an upscale apartment in Chikkabanavara on Monday morning. Police suspect a case of suicide linked to prolonged family dispute.

The deceased has been identified as Prashant Nair, 40, who was employed in a senior role at a private tech company in Bengaluru. His body was found hanging in his flat at DS Max Smart Nest Apartments.

Police said Nair was married to Pooja for more than 12 years. The couple, who has an eight-year-old daughter, had reportedly been going through marital discord and divorced recently.

While the exact circumstances remain unclear, police suspect the ongoing family dispute may have taken a toll on Nair's mental health. No note was found at the scene.

Soladevanahalli Police have registered a case and are investigating the incident. Forensic teams have inspected the site, and statements from family members and neighbours are being recorded to piece together the timeline and factors that may have led to the tragedy. Investigators are also examining call records and digital evidence for further clues.

—*Salar News*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

'INDIA WEDS LONDON'

Cinema brings UK writer, K'taka man together

GANGAVATHI, 7 APRIL

A shared love for cinema turned into a love story for a London scriptwriter and a tourist guide from Gangavathi. Charlotte Mary Finklaire, who came from London two years ago, fell in love with Murali, a tour guide and director by passion.

Their mutual love for cinema soon blossomed into a deep friendship, eventually turning into love.

When Charlottie came to Karnataka two years ago, Murali was trying his hand at directing films. They first met during the shooting of a short film, 'I Love My Country', which Murali was producing.

Murali, who also runs a guest house, has always harboured dreams of a career in filmmaking

Murali and Charlotte Mary Finklaire PHOTO: SALAR

The couple tied the knot in the presence of Murali's beloved ones at the sub registrar's office in Gangavathi on Friday.

The couple said there will be a traditional reception in London on 9 May. On that special day, they plan to release a short film titled 'India Weds London', which is based on their own love story.

Charlottie and Murali have already set up a production house named Lottie Finklaire Entertainment. Last year, the duo made a short film titled 'Dream Space', which has won three awardsPresently, Charlottie is writing the story in English for a Telugu film 'Singareni Jung Siren' while Murali is translating it into Telugu. The duo has set a goal of coming up with a film under their banner. —*Salar News*

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Millionaire's daughter embraces monkhood

YADGIR, 7 APRIL

In a departure from the usual life of a woman, a 26-year-old woman raised in the home of a wealthy businessman in Yadgiri, has decided to renounce all luxuries and become a monk.

Nikhita Gandhi, who consistently opposed the idea of marriage, is a resident of Jain Colony in Yadgir city and the daughter of Narendra Gandhi and Sangeeta Gandhi. She has two younger siblings – a boy and a girl.

According to Jain tradition, once someone becomes a monk, they must follow an extremely austere path. To mark this life-changing decision, a grand procession was held in her honour in the city.

Nikita said, "I'm happy to go and live in the Gurukul. I don't feel even a little bit of sadness about leaving everything behind. In fact, I feel immense joy…I realised seven years ago that this life is not for me. So I decided to embrace monkhood." —*Salar News*

Nikhita Gandhi PHOTO: SALAR

- According to Jain tradition, once someone becomes a monk, they must follow an extremely austere path. To mark this life-changing decision, a grand procession was held.

PHOTO: X

Crown prince of Dubai to visit India for strategic talks

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum, the Crown Prince of Dubai, is set to visit India from 8-9 April. His itinerary includes meetings with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, as well as a business roundtable aimed at enhancing India-UAE relations. The visit follows an invitation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who will host a working lunch for the Crown Prince on 8 April. This marks Sheikh Hamdan's first official visit to India as Crown Prince. His visit aims to bolster India-UAE partnerships. *—PTI*

Sitharaman to visit UK and Austria from 8 April

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will commence a weeklong official visit to the United Kingdom and Austria on April 8, 2025, to participate in the 13th India-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) and engage in investor roundtables. Scheduled for 9 April In London, the dialogue will be co-chaired by Sitharaman and the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer. Discussions will centre on financial collaboration, including investment, taxation, and sustainable climate finance. During her UK visit, Sitharaman will deliver a keynote address at an investor roundtable featuring CEOs from major financial institutions. In Austria, she will hold bilateral meetings with senior officials, including Finance Minister Markus Marterbauer and Federal Chancellor Christian Stocker, focusing on enhancing investment ties between the two nations. *—PTI*

Medha Patkar appeals to Delhi HC in defamation case

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Social activist Medha Patkar has filed an appeal in the Delhi High Court against her conviction in a defamation case initiated by Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena. The matter originates from a 2000 press release in which Patkar allegedly made defamatory statements about Saxena, who was then the President of the National Council of Civil Liberties. A Saket Court convicted Patkar in July 2024, sentencing her to five months of imprisonment and imposing a fine of Rs 10 lakh. She was also ordered to pay Rs 10 lakh in compensation to Saxena. Patkar's legal team contends that the sessions judge lacked authority for certain orders and seeks permission for her to appear via video conference rather than in person. The High Court has scheduled the next hearing for 19 May, 2025. *—PTI*

ED raids properties linked to TN minister's brother

CHENNAI, 7 APRIL

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted searches at several locations across Chennai, Tiruchirappalli, and Coimbatore on Monday, linked to the TVH Group, a real estate firm founded by KN Ravichandran, brother of Tamil Nadu's Municipal Administration Minister KN Nehru. The agency's investigations focus on allegations involving the company. Searches were also carried out in Tiruchirappalli, Nehru's hometown. In response, Law Minister S Regupathy accused the BJP-led Central government of using the ED as a political tool, claiming it operates as an ally of the BJP akin to regional parties like Chandrababu Naidu's TDP and Nitish Kumar's JDU. *—PTI*

Waqf row: Omar flayed for welcoming Rijiju

Parties protest outside Assembly after Speaker adjourns Session over demand to discuss Bill

JAMMU, 7 APRIL

Jammu and Kashmir parties fumed as Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday met Union Minister Kiren Rijiju at Asia's largest Tulip Garden folling the passing of the Waqf (Amendment) Act. National Conference (NC) President Farooq Abdullah was also present at the meeting.

"Waqf Law bonhomie! So soon. Not even a pretence while the ruling party members indulge in a drama in assembly over the issue. Rijiju piloted the Bill in Parliament as minority affairs minister," PDP leader Naeem Akhtar said.

The Opposition Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and Peoples' Conference targeted the ruling NC over the meeting and accused it of surrendering to the BJP without even a pretence over the passing of the Waqf Act. Another PDP leader Waheed Para said the NC rolled out a red carpet for Rijiju.

Meanwhile, members of the coalition government held protests outside the House over the Bill after the Speaker adjourned the Assembly following a ruckus over a demand to discuss the new law.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah with Union Minister Kiren Rijiju at the Tulip Garden in Srinagar *PHOTO: @KIRENRIJIJU/X*

The MLAs of the NC, Congress, CPI(M) and some Independents staged a dharna at the entry gate of the Assembly and protested against the BJP-led government at the Centre.

"BJP resorted to manhandling in the House. They raised religious slogans. We reminded them that this is not a wrestling ring. We are here to raise constitutional issues," NC member Altaf Kaloo told reporters.

He said they had brought an adjournment motion in the House, which the Speaker did not accept. "In the Tamil Nadu Assembly, a resolution was passed even though Muslims constitute only 6 per cent of the population. Why can't there be discussions in this Muslim-majority region?" he said.

The Speaker rejected the demand to debate the issue, stating that issues pending in the court cannot be discussed in the House.

Participating in the protest, CPI(M) member MY Tarigami called on everyone to unite against the BJP and its divisive politics.

"I urge the people of Jammu to support us. BJP may try to give it a communal colour, but we must stand united," he said. *—PTI*

> **No resolution on Waqf is silent approval. Who would have thought that 'defending minority rights' looks like a giggling photo op in full bloom?**
>
>
>
> -Waheed Para, J&K People's Democratic Alliance Leader

> **The least Muslims of India deserved was that in J&K, the only Muslim majority province in India, the CM as a mark of protest stays away from Kiren Rijju, who presented the Waqf Bill**
>
>
>
> -Sajad Lone, Peoples' Conference Chief

Manipur BJP leader's home torched for supporting Waqf

IMPHAL, 7 APRIL

BJP Minority Morcha's Manipur President Asker Ali's house was set on fire on Sunday allegedly by a mob for supporting the Waqf Amendment Act.

The incident happened at Lilong in Thoubal district on Sunday night, they said. Ali had expressed his support for the Act on social media on Saturday.

An irate mob of 7,000-8,000 gathered outside his residence around 9pm, vandalised it and then set it on fire, officials said. Following the incident, Ali posted a video on social media, apologising for his earlier statement. He also expressed opposition to the Act.

On Monday the Thoubal district administration imposed prohibitory orders under Section 163 of BNSS in entire Lilong assembly constituency. The order, promulgated by the district magistrate, prohibited the assembly of five or more people. *—PTI*

Manipur MLA to challenge Waqf Bill in SC

Imphal, 7 April

Manipur legislator Sheikh Noorul Hassan on Monday said he will challenge the Waqf Amendment Act, 2025, in the Supreme Court. In a video message, Hassan, a National People's Party MLA, said, "The Waqf Amendment Act 2025 violates the rights of Muslims. I personally condemn and reject this Act. I will challenge it in the Supreme Court." *—PTI*

Centre allocates Rs 4,200 cr to Andhra for Amaravati

AMARAVATI, 7 APRIL

The Central Government has allocated over Rs 4,200 crore for the Amaravati Capital Development project, following the receipt of an initial disbursement of USD 205 million from the World Bank. A senior official confirmed that the collaborative funding commitment from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) totals USD 1,600 million (approximately Rs 13,600 crore), with each institution contributing USD 800 million. The Central Government will contribute the remaining Rs 1,400 crore from the Rs 15,000 crore earmarked for Phase-I development.

The project gained momentum on 22 January, with the initial release of funds occurring last month. As the official noted, around Rs 800 crore was matched by the Centre, bringing the total received to Rs 4,285 crore as of 1 April. The Centre has indicated it will provide 25 per cent of the total committed amount as a "Mobilisation Advance."

Progress is expected to determine the release of subsequent instalments, with officials estimating a timeline of at least six months for further funding, as substantial work is still at the initial stages. A recent inspection by members of the World Bank and ADB reported satisfaction with the project's progress. Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary K Vijayanand announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to relaunch the construction of Amaravati in April. *—PTI*

The Centre has indicated it will provide 25 per cent of the total committed amount as a "mobilisation advance" *PHOTO: REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE*

Kamra opposes FIR in HC, relief extended

CHENNAI, 7 APRIL

The Madras High Court has extended the interim anticipatory bail for comedian Kunal Kamra until 17 April, as he faces allegations stemming from comments made during a stand-up routine targeting Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. Justice Sunder Mohan instructed Kamra to approach the relevant courts for further proceedings.

During the hearing, Kamra's counsel highlighted that three additional FIRs had been filed against him in Maharashtra, contributing to ongoing hostility from authorities, including visits to his parent's home in Mumbai. Kamra's comments were part of a performance at the Habitat Comedy Club that sparked backlash from Shiv Sena supporters.

Meanwhile, Kamra has also approached the Bombay High Court to quash an FIR for allegedly calling Shinde a "traitor," claiming his freedom of speech rights are being violated. He expressed concerns over receiving death threats and requested that police questions be conducted via video conference. In an open letter to BookMyShow, Kamra urged the platform not to delist him, or alternatively to share contact details of audiences from his previous shows, emphasising the impact of the ongoing controversy on his career. *—PTI*

Kunal Kamra *PHOTO: PTI*

BJP LEADS 2024 DONATIONS WITH RS 2,243 CRORE

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has emerged as the top recipient of political donations in the financial year 2023-24, amassing over Rs 2,243 crore from 8,358 contributions, according to a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). This amount represents a staggering 88 per cent of the total donations to national parties, which reached Rs 2,544.28 crore, showing a 199 per cent increase from the previous year. The Congress party followed as a distant second, receiving Rs 281.48 crore, while smaller parties such as the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) reported much lower amounts. Notably, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) reported zero donations above Rs 20,000 for the 18th consecutive year. *—PTI*

AN HONOUR FOR PREZ

President Droupadi Murmu on Monday received a Guard of Honour at Jeronimos Monastery in Lisbon, Portugal *PHOTO: X @RASHTRAPATIBHVN*

Rahul begins job padyatra in Bihar

PATNA, 7 APRIL

Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, joined the Congress 'Palayan Roko, Naukri Do' padyatra in Begusarai, Bihar, on Monday. Dressed in a white T-shirt, he was accompanied by notable party figures, including Kanhaiya Kumar and Bihar Congress President Rajesh Kumar.

The padyatra aimed to highlight the dire job crisis facing Bihar's youth, with participants carrying placards demanding immediate recruitment.

Later, at the 'Samvidhan Suraksha Sammelan' in Patna, Gandhi reflected on the Congress's past shortcomings, asserting the need for empowerment of marginalized communities. He repeated his parties call for a nationwide caste census.

The padyatra coincides with assembly polls, where the Congress, allied with RJD and the Left, will challenge the ruling NDA. *—PTI*

Congress leader and LoP in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi during the 'Palayan Roko Naukri Do Yatra', in Begusarai, Bihar *PHOTO: PTI*

'EVEN IF I'M JAILED'

Didi vows to fight for sacked Bengal teachers

KOLKATA, 7 APRIL

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday pledged to protect the rights of "eligible candidates" who lost their jobs after the Supreme Court verdict, and asserted that she would fight for them, even if it meant going to jail.

Speaking at a packed gathering of affected teaching and non-teaching staffers, Banerjee said, "No one has received any termination letter yet. So continue with your work. You are free to offer voluntary service in the meantime."

"Even if I have to go to jail, I will keep fighting to ensure no deserving candidate is deprived of job – this is my promise, as long as I am alive," she said in at the Netaji Indoor Stadium here.

Banerjee lashed out at the Opposition for promulgating the case,

"Lawyers of the CPI(M) like Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya moved court to ensure so many people lose jobs. They do not have the power to give jobs, but are taking away jobs," she said.

The West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE) moved the Supreme Court seeking 'modification' in its order. In its appeal, the Board requested that either "deserving" candidates be allowed to attend their duties till the end of this academic year, or till a fresh recruitment process is completed, whichever is earlier, the source told PTI.

Banerjee also announced the formation of a legal team comprising Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Kapil Sibal, Rakesh Dwivedi, Kalyan Banerjee and Prashant Bhushan, who would represent the state and the affected candidates.

On 3 April the Supreme Court upheld a 2024 Calcutta High Court judgment annulling the recruitment of 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staffers appointed through the 2016 School Service Commission (SSC) recruitment drive. *—PTI*

A teacher breaks down during a meeting with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. She was one of the 25,753 teachers who lost their jobs after a Supreme Court verdict invalidated their appoints under the 2016 SCC scheme, at Netaji Indoor Stadium, in Kolkata *PHOTO: PTI*

Stalin flays Modi over fishermen issue in TN

CHENNAI, 7 APRIL

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of neglecting the state's fishermen crisis, asserting that he failed to address the retrieval of Katchatheevu islet during his recent visit to Sri Lanka.

In a statement to the Assembly, Stalin claimed Modi did not advocate for the release of detained Tamil Nadu fishermen and their boats.

"This only shows that Tamil Nadu's demand for retrieving Katchatheevu has been ignored. It does not appear that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who went to Sri Lanka, raised the fishermen's release, too" Stalin lamented, labelling the Prime Minister's inaction as "regrettable and disappointing."

During Modi's meeting with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, a call for a humane resolution to the fishermen issue was made, leading to the release of 14 Indian fishermen as a goodwill gesture.

MK Stalin, Narendra Modi. *PHOTO: PTI*

Leader of the Opposition, Edappadi K Palaniswami, responded sharply, accusing Stalin of deflecting blame while eyeing the upcoming Assembly elections. He reminded that Katchatheevu was ceded to Sri Lanka in 1974 under a DMK government.

In response to the fishermen's plight, Stalin announced a series of welfare initiatives, including a new fishing harbour in Rameswaram and training programmes for over 36,000 individuals.

Last week, the Tamil Nadu Assembly passed a resolution urging the Centre to negotiate the retrieval of Katchatheevu and the release of imprisoned fishermen. *—PTI*

DNA paternity test shows brother raped minor

BALAGHAT, 7 APRIL

Madhya Pradesh police arrested a man four years after he allegedly raped his speech-impaired and physically-challenged minor sister. She had given birth to a child, allowing police to trace the paternity with a DNA test, officials said on Monday. Investigations revealed that the accused, then 16, was addicted to porn and assaulted his sister, then 14 in 2021. The accused was produced before a court on Saturday which sent him to a correctional home as he was a minor when he allegedly committed the crime, police inspector Prakash Vaskale told PTI. *—PTI*

PHOTO: REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

19-yr-old woman stabbed to death in public in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

A 19-year-old woman was brutally attacked by a 20-year-old man at the Kirbi Place bus stop in southwest Delhi on Sunday night. Witnesses reported the incident around 9.30pm, stating that the man repeatedly knifed the victim in full view of the public before turning the blade on himself. Both individuals sustained serious injuries and were taken to DDU Hospital for treatment. The woman suffered severe wounds to her neck and abdomen. The assailant, identified as Amit, had been friends with the victim but they had reportedly fallen out recently. A case has been registered against Amit under section 109(1) of the BNS at Delhi Cantt Police Station, and an investigation is ongoing. A 45-second video of the incident has circulated on social media, showing the harrowing scene. *—PTI*

T'gana govt moves HC on AI content on 400 acre forest

HYDERABAD, 7 APRIL

The Telangana government has lodged a petition in the High Court demanding action against AI-generated content allegedly spreading false narratives regarding a contentious 400-acre land parcel in Kancha Gachibowli. This move follows Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's serious concerns about misleading information obstructing the government's efforts to develop IT infrastructure on the site adjacent to the University of Hyderabad (UoH). On 5 April, Reddy instructed officials to pursue legal avenues to investigate the creation of deceptive AI content linked to alleged encroachments on UoH land. The government's initiative to develop the land has led to widespread protests by the UoH Students' Union, who assert that the 400 acres rightfully belong to the university. In contrast, the state government maintains that the land is under its ownership. *—PTI*

Police to inspect Delhi rollercoaster after woman dies

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Police are investigating the amusement park where a 24-year-old woman died after allegedly falling from a rollercoaster ride. The incident occurred on Thursday evening at Fun and Food Village in Kapashera, southwest Delhi, when Priyanka fell after a ride stand broke, landing directly on the ground. Visible injuries included a head injury, lacerations on her legs, and multiple abrasions. She was rushed to Manipal Hospital by her fiancé, Nikhil, but was declared dead on arrival, according to police. An FIR has been filed under sections 289 and 106 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, citing negligent conduct and culpable homicide by negligence. Priyanka's family has accused the amusement park of failing to uphold safety standards. *—PTI*

A year after NEET leak, SC closes case

Bench says no order required after Centre promises to implement committee's suggestions

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Monday closed a matter over the functioning of the National Testing Agency (NTA) in holding last year's NEET-UG after the Centre assured the bench it would implement exam reforms suggested by the expert panel.

A bench comprising Justices PS Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi took note of the Centre's compliance reports and the submissions of its solicitor general Tushar Mehta as it disposed of the plea. Mehta said the Centre had accepted all the suggestions of the seven-member panel, except one--NTA conducting online NEET exams--for the time being.

"Over 26 lakh students take up NEET across India and the government will have to ascertain availability of internet and computers... this will take some time," he said, "But the report has been accepted".

The bench noted the submissions, and said no further order was required.

Last year, the apex court had expanded the remit of the seven-member expert panel, headed by former Indian Space Research Organisation chief K Radhakrishnan, to review NTA's functioning and recommend exam reforms to make the NEET-UG, transparent and free from malpractices.

The bench said the remit of the committee, in addition to the areas suggested by the Centre and the NTA, should encompass examination security and administration, data security and technological enhancements. The bench further asked it to include policy and stakeholder engagement, collaboration and international cooperation, and recommendations for providing mental health support to students and training of NTA staff.

The court had flagged multiple lapses on the part of NTA like the security breach at an examination centre in Jharkhand's Hazaribagh where the rear door of the strong room was opened and unauthorised people were permitted to access question papers; transportation of question papers by e-rickshaws and distribution of wrong set of question papers among the candidates. *—PTI*

ED plea against bail to Lalu's aide junked

New Delhi, 7 April

The Supreme Court refused to examine a plea of the ED against the bail granted to RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav's close aide and businessman Amit Katyal in a money laundering case linked to the alleged land-for-jobs scam in the Indian Railways. "No big fish. Main persons have not been arrested. Why go on after only small flies? " the bench said. *—PTI*

SC junks plea for 100% manual counting of VVPAT

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to examine a plea seeking a direction to the Election Commission of India for a 100 per cent manual counting of voter verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) slips in addition to electronic counting by the control unit.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and K V Viswanathan was dealing with the plea of one Hans Raj Jain against the 12 August, 2024 judgement of the Delhi High Court. "We do not find any good ground to interfere with the impugned judgement (of the Delhi High Court)," the CJI said, dismissing his appeal.

Rejecting the pleas seeking 100 per cent cross-verification of electronic voting machines data with VVPAT records, the top court then held EVMs were safe, simple, secure, and user-friendly. *—PTI*

SC says Rippling founder's marriage dispute needs mediation

New Delhi, 7 April

The Supreme Court on Monday observed that the matrimonial dispute between Rippling co-founder Prasanna Sankar and his wife Dhivya Sashidhar needs to be sent for mediation.

The Bench of Justice MM Sundresh and Justice Rajesh Bindal was hearing the case after Sankar claimed that his wife had made filed false cases against him and accused his wife of trying to abduct their son. He claimed that the Tamil Nadu police were harassing him and approached the Madras High Court of which directed the police to not harass him. Sashidhar meanwhile claimed that she filed cases, including a kidnapping case, to trace the whereabouts of her son and denied all allegations. She further claimed Sankar had solicited prostitutes, forced her into an open marriage and even 'coerced her into having painful sex shortly after delivery.

Noting that both sides had made the accusations on social media, the court noted that restraint was required on social media and said the matter was for mediation. *—Agencies*

Ram Navami procession allegedly attacked in Kolkata **PHOTO: X**

Several Ram Navami processions allegedly attacked

KANPUR/ PRAYAGRAJ/ PALGHAR/KOLKATA 7 APRIL

Ram Navami a festival that marks the birth of Hindu deity Ram saw violence in several states. However, in many instances police denounced the claims, saying the processions weren't actually attacked.

Uttar Pradesh

A group of men carrying saffron flags climbed the gate of a dargah in Sikandra area on Sunday and shouted slogans. The videos of the men have since gone viral. Additional police were rushed to the spot and the men were removed from the Ghazi Miyan Ki Dargah.

Deputy Commissioner of Police DCP (Ganga Nagar) Kuldeep Singh Gunawat claimed departmental action is being taken against the policemen who were responsible for maintaining order at the spot.

Meanwhile, security was tightened in the Nai Sadak area over claims that a procession was pelted with stones thrown from rooftops of buildings.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Shrawan Kumar Singh however said, "Prima facie it appears to be a rumour, as no one has been hit by bricks or stones. We have made proper inspections and scanned CCTV footage and videos and found no evidence corroborating the charges so far."

Maharashtra

Unidentified persons allegedly threw eggs from a rooftop at participants of a motorbike rally in Maharashtra's Palghar district, leading to brief tension in the area, police said on Monday.

One person has been detained for questioning, the police said.

Kolkata

In Kolkata, BJP MP Sukanta Majumdar on Sunday claimed that a Ram Navami rally was attacked, saying that "stones were rained down on vehicles just for carrying saffron flags".

Police however clarified that no permission was taken for any procession.

—PTI with Agencies

HC directs FIR against five cops for Badlapur encounter

MUMBAI, 7 APRIL

The Bombay High Court on Monday ordered an FIR against five policemen for the custodial death of Badlapur sexual assault case accused Akshay Shinde, who was allegedly shot dead in a police van, and setting up of an SIT, while pulling up the government for its "reluctance" in the matter.

The HC said it cannot remain "mute spectators" a division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Neela Gokhale said.

PHOTO: PTI

The bench directed the joint commissioner of Mumbai Police's crime branch to set up a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the case and register FIR. The bench directed the state CID, which is probing the case as an accidental death, to hand over all case papers to the SIT within two days.

Rapping the Maharashtra government for its "reluctance" to lodge an FIR, the bench said such action undermines the state's legitimacy and the common man's faith in the justice system.

Shinde, accused of sexually assaulting two minor girls at a school in Thane district, was shot dead on 23 September, when he was being transported in a police vehicle. —PTI

'HOSP RESPONSIBLE FOR PREGNANT WOMAN'S DEATH'

PUNE, 7 APRIL

The committee probing the death of a pregnant woman who was denied admission by a Pune hospital said the establishment violated norms.

The four-member committee, headed by the state health department Joint Director Dr Radhakishan Pawar, submitted its report to the Pune police on Monday.

"In an emergency, charitable hospitals must admit the patient immediately and provide essential medical facilities for life-saving emergency treatment till stabilisation. It is imperative for the hospital to provide 'golden hours treatment' without thinking about the patient's financial capability. It is also imperative for the hospital to arrange transportation of the patient to the referred hospital," the panel noted.

Tanisha Bhise was allegedly refused admission at Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital over non-payment of a Rs 10 lakh deposit. Subsequently, she died at another facility after giving birth to twin daughters. *—PTI*

Indigo flight makes emergency landing after passenger dies

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 7 APRIL

An IndiGo Airlines flight was compelled to make an emergency landing at Chikalthana Airport in Maharashtra after an 89-year-old woman died onboard. The incident occurred on Sunday night while the flight was en route from Mumbai to Varanasi.

According to airport officials, Sushila Devi, a resident of Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh, began to feel unwell during the flight. The aircraft landed around 10pm to address the medical emergency. Despite efforts by a medical team who examined her upon landing, she was pronounced dead.

Authorities at the MIDC CIDCO police station conducted the necessary formalities before the flight continued its journey to Varanasi.

IndiGo Airlines expressed condolences for the loss and said it is providing support to the family. *—PTI*

Consumer forum can't issue arrest warrant: HC

KOLKATA, 7 APRIL

Calcutta High Court has held that a consumer forum cannot issue arrest warrant in an execution proceeding, and may only order detention in civil prison.

The court was hearing on an application challenging a District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum order by which a warrant of arrest was issued against the petitioner.

Justice Suvra Ghosh quashed the warrant, holding that it is outside the scope of the Consumer Protection Act.

Justice Ghosh said the legal issue involved herein is as to whether the consumer forum has the authority to issue a warrant of arrest against the petitioner in the execution proceeding. He said that the high court had in 2022 held that in an execution application, the commission cannot issue a warrant. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Police nab 'fake' MP doc after 7 deaths

DAMOH/BHOPAL, 7 APRIL

Police on Monday arrested Narendra John Camm, an alleged fake cardiologist who is linked to death of seven patients at a missionary hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district, from adjoining Uttar Pradesh, a senior official said.

Camm, is suspected of conducting unregistered angiographies and angioplasties.

The case was filed on Sunday after a complaint from Damoh's Chief Medical and Health Officer, MK Jain.

According to the complaint, the real name of the doctor is Narendra Vikramaditya Yadav, who allegedly used the identity of a well-known UK cardiologist, Professor John Camm, to mislead patients. *—PTI*

'CUSP OF AN ERA'

Space emerging as new domain of warfare: CDS

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan on Monday said humanity is on the "cusp of an era" where space is the new domain of warfare.

He pitched for developing a "space culture" which could entail developing doctrines, research and dedicated warfare schools.

In his inaugural address at the third edition of the Indian DefSpace Symposium, underlined how different domains underlined the success of military eras.

The CDS said in the past, "a seafaring culture or a maritime culture" may have held the Portuguese, Spaniard, the English or the Dutch to dominate the world.

"Similarly, the aerospace culture led to the domination by the US and European nations. And both the domains have a lasting impact on warfare. Military power was actually centred around this particular culture getting developed and creation of capabilities towards that," the CDS added.

Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan said humanity is on the cusp of an era where space will dictate warfare **PHOTO: PTI**

"Today we are on the cusp of an era where space is emerging as a new domain of warfare, and it is going to dominate warfare. All the three primary elements of warfare (land, sea, air) will depend on space," Chauhan said.

Detailing the aspects of the space culture, he said, "Space culture is, doing seminal research on warfare. It is about the development of doctrines and strategies about space. Physical capabilities grow from the ideas that you generate. So generation of ideas is very important."

Space culture is about development of subjects like space laws, or a framework for space diplomacy, the CDS added.

He said that while scope for developing the space culture is vast, there is very little literature on it currently.

The CDS underlined that space culture is about "new ideas on the use of space", which will "leap forward" to creation of new capabilities.

"Building a space culture about space journals, articles, space warfare institutes and societies that ideate on it," he said, adding, "I think there is an important need that Services also have their own space warfare schools in the near future." *—PTI*

5 using navigation app get stranded in Kerala forest

MALAPPURAM, 7 APRIL

A group of five men from Kalpetta found themselves stranded in a dense forest in Nilambur on Sunday night after following a navigation app's route.

They were en route to a function when the app directed them through a less-travelled forest path.

As the heavy rain fell, the men's car became stuck in a marshy pit, leaving them unable to proceed.

The location was not only remote but also known for its wildlife, including elephants and wild boars, adding to the men's distress.

Frightened and isolated, they managed to contact the local fire station for help. A rescue team was quickly dispatched to the area.

Fire service personnel reported that the car was towed out of the pit and ultimately resumed their journey after the ordeal.

PHOTO: PTI

"Actually, they didn't lose their way. There is a path through the forest that leads to their destination in Nilambur," a fire and rescue official said. "However, it was raining heavily when they entered the forest at night, and their car got stuck in a pit," "The car got stuck in the pit and broke down. We had to tow it by tying it to our vehicle with a rope," the officer said, adding that the passengers later continued their journey. *—PTI*

SEEKING PRIVILEGE

A supporter of former President Jair Bolsonaro wears a mask of US President Donald Trump attends a demonstration demanding amnesty for those arrested for 2023's alleged coup attempt, in Sao Paulo
PHOTO: PTI

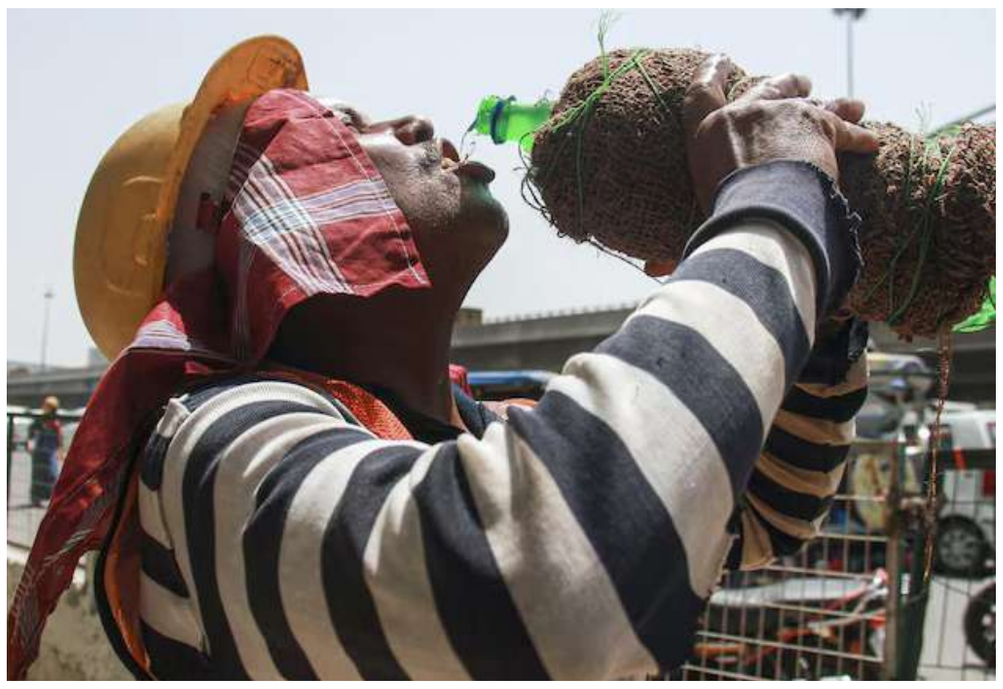
Outdoor workers in Delhi struggle amid heatwave

As World Health Day is observed under the theme "My health, My right", thousands of outdoor workers across the national capital — from auto-rickshaw drivers and rickshaw pullers to roadside vendors — are grappling with a growing health crisis due to extreme heat and air pollution.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for the city, forecasting a heatwave to persist until Wednesday. Delhi's maximum temperature settled at 38.2 degrees Celsius, 3.1 degrees above the seasonal average on Sunday. The minimum temperature was 18.5 degrees Celsius, and the Air Quality Index (AQI) remained in the 'poor' category at 209.

Highlighting the physical toll of the heatwave, auto-rickshaw driver Santosh Hazra said, "Skin gets burnt during a heatwave; loo also affects health. There's ample availability of free water in Delhi but there's a shortage of shaded areas to rest." Another auto driver, Prashant Kumar, 24, complained of feeling drowsy during the hot season. "I've been working for 8 years now, and summers have always been difficult, as it greatly affects health. We get tired quickly, which limits our working hours. Delhi pollution also impacts us; we can feel it even in summer." However, the scorching heat doesn't only bring physical hardships but also financial distress.

Sarabjeet Singh, 45, who runs a fruit cart near Red Fort, complained of heatwave impacting his income. "Due to the scorching heat, we get tired very easily. It impacts our income. Also, there are no customers from 12 to 4 pm." On the other hand, Mohammad Haseem, 42, said the compounded effects of heat and humidity reduce work and increase costs. "There's low income because people don't step out. We also end up spending money on buying water and lemon juice."



Thousands of outdoor workers across the national capital are grappling with a growing health crisis due to extreme heat and air pollution
PHOTO: PTI

Highlighting the environmental factors contributing to rising temperatures, environmentalist Bhavreen Kandhari told PTI, "The expansion of concrete landscapes at the expense of tree cover has intensified the urban heat island effect, aggravating temperature to extremes." Kandhari suggested that a comprehensive, long-term strategy is needed that includes protection and expansion of tree cover to enhance biodiversity and sustainable urban planning to mitigate excessive concretisation.

Meanwhile, a report by the NGO Sustainable Futures Collaborative has warned that while cities are taking short-term emergency actions like distributing water and adjusting work hours, long-term heat resilience strategies remain weak or absent. These include occupational cooling, insurance for lost wages, heat mapping of urban hot spots and improving electricity reliability, their recently-released report suggested.

The IMD's yellow alert also signals moderate health concerns, particularly for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, infants, and those with chronic conditions. Jaspreet Singh, 34, who has been running a food cart in the Red Fort area for 11 years, said, "We are habituated to this heat now, but we witness people fainting now and then due to the weather."

Narendra Shah, 70, rickshaw puller, is among the vulnerable populations most affected during heatwaves. "This time, the weather has become worse very early. I'm the sole breadwinner in the family, and earnings get affected during this time. However, I must mention that there is ample availability of free water across the city," Shah told PTI.

Medical professionals have also warned that the impact of such heat exposure is often underestimated. Dr Vivek Nangia, a senior pulmonologist, said, "First, the stage is heat cramps, second is heat exhaustion wherein people could develop dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and stage three is heat stroke, where people land up in hospitals and ICUs. It's like a medical emergency. The overall impact is dehydration, loss of salt and minerals from the body." He added that extreme heat can worsen pre-existing heart, lung or kidney diseases, and, in severe cases, it may lead to confusion, organ failure or even death.

Measures that can be taken to avoid heat include staying indoors during peak hours, wearing light-coloured clothing, keeping the head covered and consuming ample fluids. However, as the income of daily-wage earners depends on street-based work, these measures are difficult to follow.

Delhi has expanded access to free drinking water in many public areas, but the workers say other infrastructure, like shaded zones or cooling shelters, remains scarce. *—PTI*

SALAR سالار

Israel controls 50% of Gaza after expanding buffer zone

Israel has dramatically expanded its footprint in the Gaza Strip since relaunching its war against Hamas last month. It now controls more than 50 per cent of the territory and is squeezing Palestinians into shrinking wedges of land.

The largest contiguous area the army controls is around the Gaza border, where the military has razed Palestinian homes, farmland and infrastructure to the point of uninhabitability, according to Israeli soldiers and rights groups. This military buffer zone has doubled in size in recent weeks.

Israel has depicted its tightening grip as a temporary necessity to pressure Hamas into releasing the remaining hostages taken during the 7 October, 2023, attack that started the war. But the land Israel holds, which includes a corridor that divides the territory's north from south, could be used for wielding long-term control, human rights groups and Gaza experts say. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last week that even after Hamas is defeated, Israel will keep security control in Gaza and push Palestinians to leave.

The demolition close to the Israeli border and the systematic expansion of the buffer zone has been going on since the war began 18 months ago, five Israeli soldiers told The Associated Press (AP). "They destroyed everything they could, they shot everything that looks functioning (the Palestinians) will have nothing to come back, they will not come back, never," a soldier deployed with a tank squad guarding the demolition teams said. He and four other soldiers spoke to AP on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

A report documenting the accounts of soldiers who were in the buffer zone was released Monday by Breaking The Silence, an anti-occupation veterans group. A handful of soldiers -- including some who also spoke to AP -- described watching the army turn the zone into a vast wasteland. Asked about the soldiers' accounts, the Israeli army said it is acting to protect its country and especially to improve security in southern communities devastated by the 7 October, attack, in which some 1,200 people were killed and 251 taken hostage.

The army said it does not seek to harm civilians in Gaza, and that it abides by international law.

In the early days of the war, Israeli troops forced Palestinians from communities near the border and destroyed the land to create a buffer zone more than a kilometre deep, according to Breaking The Silence. Its troops also seized a swath of land across Gaza known as the Netzarim Corridor that isolated the north, including Gaza City, from the rest of the narrow, coastal strip, home to more than 2 million people.

When Israel resumed the war last month, it doubled the size of the buffer zone, pushing it as far as 3kms into Gaza in some places, according to a map issued by the military. The buffer zone and the Netzarim Corridor make up at least 50 per cent of the strip, said Yaakov Garb, a professor of environmental studies at Ben Gurion University, who has been examining Israeli-Palestinian land use patterns for decades. Last week, Netanyahu said Israel intends to create another corridor that slices across southern Gaza, cutting off the city of Rafah from the rest of the territory. Israel's control of Gaza is even greater taking into account areas where it recently ordered civilians to evacuate ahead of planned attacks.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians used to live in the land that now makes up Israel's buffer zone, an area that was key to Gaza's agricultural output. Satellite images show once dense neighbourhoods turned to rubble, as well as nearly a dozen new Israeli army outposts since the ceasefire ended. When the ceasefire was announced in January, Nidal Alzaanin went back to his home in Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza. His property stood on the edge of the buffer zone and lay in ruins.

All that remains is a photo of him and his wife on their wedding day, a drawing of his son's face on a porcelain plate and the carcass of a 150-year-old sycamore tree planted by his great-grandfather. His greenhouse was reduced to twisted scraps of metal. "It took 20 years to build a house and within five minutes they destroyed all my dreams and my children's dreams," he said from Gaza City, where he now shelters.

Israel's bombardment and ground offensives throughout the war have left vast swaths of Gaza's cities and towns destroyed. The five soldiers who spoke to the AP said Israeli troops were ordered to destroy farmland, irrigation pipes, crops and trees as well as thousands of buildings, including residential and public structures, so that militants had nowhere to hide. *—PTI*

Palestinians retrieve a body from the rubble of a building destroyed by an Israeli airstrike in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip, on Monday
PHOTO: PTI

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Indonesia plans largest deforestation for bioethanol fuel, sugar, rice

Indonesia plans to clear forests about the size of Belgium to produce sugarcane-derived bioethanol, rice and other food crops, potentially displacing Indigenous groups who rely on the land to survive.

Local communities say they're already experiencing harm from the government-backed project, which environmental watchdogs say is the largest current planned deforestation operation in the world.

A vast tropical archipelago stretching across the equator, Indonesia is home to the world's third-largest rainforest, home to many endangered species of wildlife and plants, including orangutans, elephants and giant forest flowers. Some live nowhere else.

Indonesia has been building food estates, massive plantations designed to improve the country's food security for decades, with varying level of success. The concept was revived by former President Joko Widodo during his 2014-2024 administration.

The current president, Prabowo Subianto, has expanded such projects to include crops to produce bioethanol, a renewable fuel made from plants like sugar cane or corn, in pursuit of Indonesia's ambition to improve its energy mix and develop more renewable sources.

"I am confident that within four to five years at the latest, we will achieve food self-sufficiency," Prabowo said in October 2024. "We must be self-sufficient in energy and we have the capacity to achieve this."

Biofuels, such as bioethanol, play an important role in decarbonising transport by providing a low-carbon solution for sectors that heavily rely on fossil fuels such as trucking, shipping and aviation, according to the International Energy Agency.

But the agency also cautions expansion of biofuel should have minimal impact on land-use, food and other environmental factors in order to be developed sustainably.

That's of particular concern in Indonesia, where more t han 74 million hectares of Indonesian rainforest — an area twice the size of Germany — have been logged, burned or degraded for development of palm oil, paper and rubber plantations, nickel mining and other commodities since 1950, according to Global Forest Watch.

Indonesia has vast potential for bioethanol production due to its extensive agricultural land but currently lacks sustainable feedstocks, like sugarcane and cassava. A previous attempt to introduce bioethanol-blended fuel in 2007 was discontinued a few years later due to a lack of feedstock supply.

Local communities say they're already experiencing harm from the government-backed project
PHOTO: PTI

Since then, the government has accelerated work on its food and energy estate mega-project, which spans 4.3 million hectares on the islands of Papua and Kalimantan.

Experts say the combined size of the numerous project sites makes the mega-project the largest current deforestation project in the world.

The largest site, called the Merauke Integrated Food and Energy Estate, will cover more than 3 million hectares in the far-eastern region of Papua, according to the international environmental organisation Mighty Earth.

Overlapping with the Trans-Fly ecoregion, it's home to critically endangered and endemic mammals, birds and turtles and to several Indigenous groups who rely on traditional ways of living.

"Imagine every piece of vegetation in that area being completely cleared ... having all the trees and the wildlife erased from the landscape and replaced with a monoculture," said Glenn Horowitz, CEO of Mighty Earth. "It's creating a zone of death in one of the most vibrant spots on Earth."

An unpublished government feasibility assessment obtained and reviewed by The Associated Press (AP) estimates that carbon dioxide emissions from clearing land for the project will total 315 million tonnes of C02 equivalent.

An independent assessment by the Indonesia-based think tank Center of Economic and Law Studies estimated double that.

Deforestation contributes to erosion, damages biodiverse areas, threatens wildlife and humans who rely on the forest and intensifies disasters from extreme weather.

Hashim Djojohadikusumo, Subianto's brother and envoy for energy and the environment, said the government will reforest 6.5 million hectares (16 million acres) of degraded and deforested land.

"Thus, the food estate programme continues while we mitigate the possible negative impacts with new programmes, one of which is reforestation," he said.

But experts warn that reforestation, while essential, cannot match the ecological benefits of old-growth ecosystems, which store vast amounts of carbon in their soils and biomass, regulate water cycles and support biodiversity.

Indonesia's Ministry of Agriculture, which oversees the food and energy estate project, did not respond to requests for comment from

The AP. Merauke Sugar Group and Jhonlin Group, the two main Indonesian companies in charge of the project in Merauke, did not respond to requests for comment from the AP.

The local communities in Papua that rely on the area for hunting, fishing and other aspects of their cultural identity say their basic needs have been harmed by the projects.

Vincen Kwipalo, 63, a villager living in the area, said that land he and other villagers used for hunting was turned into sugarcane nurseries guarded by groups of men, preventing them from engaging in their usual ways of surviving.

The environmental watch groups say the projects' development will impact generations of Indigenous groups for generations to come. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Russia slashes jail term for US soldier convicted of theft

MOSCOW, 7 APRIL

An appellate court in Russia's far east on Monday reduced the prison sentence for an American soldier convicted of stealing and making threats of murder, Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti reported. Staff Sgt. Gordon Black, 34, flew to the Pacific port city of Vladivostok to see his girlfriend and was arrested in May 2024 after she accused him of stealing from her, according to US officials and Russian authorities. A month later, a court in Vladivostok convicted him and sentenced him to three years and nine months in prison. Black lost one appeal in a regional court that upheld his sentence, but the judge in the 9th Court of Cassation on Monday agreed to reduce his sentence to three years and two months in prison. *—PTI*

Journalist gets bail in two separate cases in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 7 APRIL

Two courts in Pakistan on Monday accepted the bail pleas of a journalist in separate cases more than two weeks after he was arrested for allegedly being involved in anti-state activities on social media and data theft through a call centre. Farhan Mallick, founder of media agency Raftar and a former news director at Samaa TV, was arrested by the Federal Investigation Agency on 20 March in Karachi and booked under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca) and the Pakistan Penal Code. Mallick's arrest was widely criticised by media groups and rights bodies, terming it an attack on the freedom of expression. District and Sessions Judge (East) Wasim Iqbal approved Mallick's appeal against a judicial magistrate's denial of bail in the "anti-state" content case while Judicial Magistrate Piyar Ali Khoso granted him bail in the call centre case. *—PTI*

US blocks sea salt imports from South Korean firm

SEOUL, 7 APRIL

The United States has blocked imports of sea salt products from a major South Korean salt farm accused of using slave labour, becoming the first trade partner to take punitive action against a decades-long problem on salt farms in remote islands off South Korea's southwest coast. US Customs and Border Protection issued a withhold release order against the Taepyung salt farm, saying information "reasonably indicates" the use of forced labor at the company in the island county of Sinan, where most of South Korea's sea salt products are made. Under the order issued on 2 April, CBP personnel at all US ports of entry are required to detain sea salt products sourced from the farm. *—PTI*

Japanese emperor pays tributes to WW-II martyrs

IWO-TO, 7 APRIL

Japan's Emperor Naruhito on Monday visited Iwo Jima to pay tribute to those who died on the island where one of World War-II's harshest battles was fought 80 years ago. The visit by Naruhito and his wife, Emperor Masako, both born after the war, is their first to the island. The emperor's Iwo Jima visit comes about 10 days after Japan and the US held a joint memorial service to mark the end of the battle of Iwo Jima in late March, when Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and Defence Minister Gen Nakatani joined US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth, as well as other officials and several veterans who survived the battle, to honour the war dead from both sides. *—PTI*

50 nations contact US for talks on tariff

President Donald Trump says countries are 'dying to make a deal' as global markets slide

WEST PALM BEACH, 7 APRIL

US president Donald Trump refused to back down on tariffs even as officials in the administration claimed more than 50 countries had reached out to White House to begin talks.

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, Trump said he didn't want global markets to fall, but also that he wasn't concerned about the massive sell-off either, adding, "sometimes you have to take medicine to fix something."

"I spoke to a lot of leaders, European, Asian, from all over the world," Trump said. "They're dying to make a deal. And I said, we're not going to have deficits with your country. We're not going to do that, because to me a deficit is a loss. We're going to have surpluses or at worst, going to be breaking even."

His comments came as global financial markets appeared on track to continue sharp declines once trading resumes Monday, and after Trump's aides sought to soothe market concerns by saying more than 50 nations had reached out about launching negotiations to lift the tariffs.

Top White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett acknowledging that other countries are "angry and retaliating," defended the tariffs saying, "by the way, coming to the table, I got a report from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative that more than 50 nations had reached out to the White House to begin talks."

- Trump said he didn't want global markets to fall, but also that he wasn't concerned about the massive sell-off either

Trump, who spent the weekend in Florida playing golf, posted online that "WE WILL WIN. HANG TOUGH, it won't be easy." His Cabinet members and economic advisers were out in force Sunday defending the tariffs and downplaying the consequences for the global economy.

The higher rates are set to be collected beginning Wednesday, ushering in a new era of economic uncertainty with no clear end in sight. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said "There doesn't have to be a recession. Who knows how the market is going to react in a day, in a week? What we are looking at is building the long-term economic fundamentals for prosperity." *—PTI*

EU SEEKS JOINT STRATEGY AS ASIAN COUNTRIES REACH OUT

Bangkok, 7 April

Germany's Economy Minister Robert Habeck, was defiant as he arrived at a meeting of European Union trade ministers in Luxembourg, saying the premise of the wide-ranging tariffs was "nonsense" and that attempts by individual countries to win exemptions haven't worked in the past. It's important for the EU to stick together, he said. That "means being clear that we are in a strong position — America is in a position of weakness." South Korea's is sending its top negotiator, Inkyo Cheong, to the US this week while Pakistan also has planned to send a delegation to Washington this month. *—PTI*

CHINA ACCUSES US OF ECONOMIC BULLYING WITH TARIFFS

Bangkok, 7 April

China on Monday accused the US of unilateralism, protectionism and economic bullying with tariffs, while calling on representatives of American companies including Tesla, to "take concrete actions" to resolve the tariffs. Putting "America First" over international rules harms the stability of global production and the supply chain and seriously impacts the world's economic recovery, Foreign Affairs spokesperson Lin Jian told reporters adding that "Pressure and threats are not the way to deal with China. China will firmly safeguard its legitimate rights and interests." *—PTI*

File photo of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy meeting American President Donald Trump in New York **PHOTO: PTI**

Israel strikes tents near hospital in Gaza

DEIR AL-BALAH, 7 APRIL

Gaza's Health Ministry said over the last 24 hours local hospitals have received the bodies of 57 people as Israeli military conducted strikes on tents outside two major hospitals in the Gaza strip overnight. Another strike on a media tent outside Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis at around 2 a.m. set the tent ablaze, killing Yousef al-Faqawi, a reporter for the Palestine Today news website, and another man, according to the hospital. The six reporters were wounded in that strike.

Monday's update brings the total Palestinian death toll from the 18-month Israel-Hamas war to 50,752. The ministry does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its records, but says more than half the dead are women and children. Israel says it has killed around 20,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Palestinians inspect the site hit by an Israeli missile at Deir al-Balah in Gaza Strip on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron has also urged the lifting of Israel's blockade on humanitarian aid even as news reports currently say Israel controls around 50 percent of Gaza. Macron was in Cairo on Monday to meet with President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi and later with Jordan's King Abdullah II, close Western allies, who are also calling for a ceasefire.

Israel ended its truce with Hamas last month and cut off all imports of food, fuel and humanitarian aid to the territory's 2 million Palestinians to try and pressure Hamas to accept new terms in their ceasefire agreement. Egypt and the Gulf nation of Qatar have served as key mediators with Hamas.

Israel has carried out waves of strikes across Gaza and ground forces have carved out new military zones since it ended its ceasefire with Hamas last month. Even as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to meet with Trump in Washington on Monday to discuss Gaza and other issues, he said last week that even after Hamas is defeated, Israel will keep security control in Gaza and push Palestinians to leave. *—PTI*

Ukraine agrees to talks with US on mineral deal

KYIV, 7 APRIL

Even as Ukraine reels under the effect of Russian airstrikes, the country will send a team to Washington next week to begin negotiations on a new draft of a deal that would give the US access to Ukraine's valuable mineral resources, Economy Minister Yuliia Svyrydenko told The Associated Press. "The new draft agreement from the US shows that the intention to create a fund or jointly invest remains," Svyrydenko said Saturday, during a trip to northern Ukraine.

The delegation from Kyiv will include representatives from the Ministries of Economy, Foreign Affairs, Justice and Finance. The long-running negotiations over a mineral deal have already strained relations between Kyiv and Washington. The two sides had been preparing in February to sign a framework agreement but the plan was derailed following a contentious meeting in the Oval Office between US President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance and Zelenskyy.

The new draft which has been leaked has faced severe criticism as it not only rare-earth minerals but gas and oil. Ukraine holds significant deposits of more than 20 minerals deemed strategically critical by the US, including titanium, which is used to make aircraft wings, lithium, key to several battery technologies, and uranium, used in nuclear power. "What we have now is a document that reflects the position of the US Treasury legal team," said Svyrydenko. "This is not a final version, it's not a joint position." She said adding that it marked a new stage in relations with the United States. *—PTI*

MYANMAR EARTHQUAKE

Rain hampers rescue efforts

BANGKOK, 7 APRIL

The death toll due to the earthquake on March 28 has now surpassed 3,500 and continues to rise even as heavy rainfall and winds further complicate relief efforts, forcing many homeless people to sleep outdoors. This week's weather forecast predicts more scattered showers and thunderstorms.

In Naypyitaw, residents are clearing debris and salvaging materials from their damaged homes, as soldiers assist with the removal of wreckage from Buddhist monasteries. The Myanmar Fire Services Department reported that ten bodies were recovered from a collapsed building in Mandalay, the country's second-largest city. International rescue teams, including those from Singapore, Malaysia, and India, have returned home after concluding their missions.

People search for belongings in debris of damaged buildings after the earthquake on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

The magnitude 7.7 earthquake affected six regions and states, crippling infrastructure and leaving many areas without power or communications. Simultaneously, tensions between the military government and its opponents persist. *—PTI*

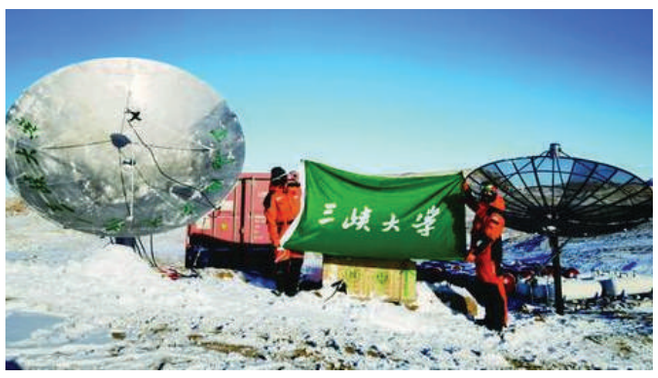
FOR ASTRONOMICAL STUDIES

China enhances Antarctic presence with new telescope

BEIJING, 7 APRIL

China has unveiled its latest scientific venture in Antarctica, a 3.2-metre aperture radio/millimetre-wave telescope named the "Three Gorges Antarctic Eye." This telescope, co-developed by China Three Gorges University and Shanghai Normal University, marks a significant advancement in China's Antarctic astronomical research, as reported by the state-run Xinhua news agency.

The telescope is located at one of China's five research stations in Antarctica and is designed to take advantage of the continent's pristine atmospheric conditions for infrared and millimetre-wave observations. This latest deployment builds on China's previous initiatives, including the Antarctic Survey Telescopes and other astronomical instruments, further contributing to global efforts in studying cosmic phenomena from this remote location.



China has conducted radio astronomical observations for the first time in Antarctica with its new telescope at its Zhongshan Station **PHOTO: X**

In 2022, China operationalised its fifth research station in Antarctica, which boasts a floor space of 5,244 square metres. This station is equipped to support 80 expedition team members during the summer months and 30 during winter, according to official media reports.

Currently, there are 70 permanent research stations across Antarctica, representing 29 countries from around the globe. India maintains two active research stations, Maitri and Bharti, while the United States operates six stations and Australia has three. *—PTI*

Pak forces kill 8 terrorists near Afghanistan border

PESHAWAR, 7 APRIL

Eight terrorists have been killed and four injured as Pakistan's security forces thwarted an infiltration attempt along the Afghanistan border in the North Waziristan district, the military said on Monday.

Pakistan has witnessed an uptick in terror activities over the past year, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, after the proscribed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) ended its ceasefire with the government in November 2022.

On the intervening night of 5–6 April, the "movement of a group of Khawarij', trying to infiltrate through Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was picked up by the security forces in the general area" of North Waziristan's Hassan Khel, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Sunday.

Eight terrorists were killed and four others injured in an exchange of fire, it said.

'Fitna Al Khawarij' is a term that the state uses to refer to the banned TTP.

"Pakistan has consistently been asking the interim Afghan government to ensure effective border management on their side," the ISPR noted, adding that it expected Kabul to "fulfil its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by Khawarij for perpetrating acts of terrorism against Pakistan".

The ISPR said that "security forces are committed to secure the borders and wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country". The statement added that a sanitisation operation was being conducted to eliminate any other Khawarij found in the area.

The failed infiltration attempt follows another one in late March in North Waziristan. Security forces had foiled that attempt and killed 16 terrorists. *—PTI*

Peter Dutton **PHOTO: X**

Aus Opposition withdraws objection to WFH

MELBOURNE, 7 APRIL

Australia's opposition party on Monday withdrew its election promises to remove the work-from-home option for public servants to reduce inefficiency and to slash by 20 per cent public sector jobs.

Opposition leader Peter Dutton announced that his Liberal Party has dropped its pledge that public servants would be required to work from their offices five days a week, except for exceptional circumstances. "I think we made a mistake in relation to this policy," Dutton told Nine Network television. "Our intention was to make sure that where taxpayers are working hard and their money is being spent to pay wages, it's being spent efficiently."

The opposition also withdrew a promise to use forced redundancy payments to slash 41,000 jobs from the 1,85,000 positions in the Australian Public Service. The reductions would instead be achieved through natural attrition and an employment freeze, he said.

Dutton's announcements were the first significant policy shifts since Prime Minister Anthony Albanese called the May 3 election last month.

Members of the centre-left Labor Party government have accused their conservative opponents of mimicking US President Donald Trump and his billionaire adviser Elon Musk who has spearheaded the so-called Department of Government Efficiency efforts to downsize and overhaul the US government. "This is DOGE-y Dutton taking his cues and policies straight from the US," Treasurer Jim Chalmers said. *—PTI*

India's export to US may decline by $5.7B

Tariffs likely to give a mild blow to India's merchandise exports to the US, says GTRI

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

India could see a decline of USD 5.76 billion or 6.41 per cent in exports to US because of the tariffs, in 2025, said a research report by the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

GTRI report is based on the evaluation of sector-specific exposure, changes in tariff rates, and competitive dynamics involving key players like China, Mexico, and Canada.

The research also highlights sectors where India may gain or lose ground, offering a nuanced picture of the challenges and opportunities emerging from the new US tariff regime.

The tariffs are likely to give a mild blow to India's merchandise exports to US. In 2024, India exported USD 89.81 billion worth of goods to US, but this could decline as a result of the new trade measures in 2025.

GTRI study says several key product groups are likely to see reduced exports. Exports of fish and crustaceans may fall by 20.2 per cent, iron or steel articles by 18.0 per cent, and diamonds, gold, and related products by 15.3 per cent.

India exported USD 89.81 billion worth of goods to US, but this could decline as a result of the new trade measures in 2025 *PHOTO: X*

Vehicle and auto parts exports are projected to drop by 12.1 per cent, electrical, telecom, and electronic products may decline by 12.0 per cent. Other categories such as plastics articles exports to the US may fall by 9.4 per cent, carpets by 6.3 per cent, petroleum products by 5.2 per cent, organic chemicals by 2.2 per cent, and machinery by 2 per cent said GTRI research.

However, the report also said that there are pockets of opportunity amid the disruption for India's exports to US.

India could see modest gains in exports in sectors where US has raised higher tariffs on competing countries.

The report noted that while the overall effect of new tariffs points toward a decline in trade, India's competitive position in select product segments may help cushion some of the losses. *—ANI*

Gold tumbles to Rs 91,450 per 10g on trade war fears

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Gold prices tumbled by Rs 1,550 to Rs 91,450 per 10g in the national capital on Monday amid heavy selling by jewellers and stockists as well as weak global trend, according to the All India Sarafa Association. On Friday, gold of 99.9 per cent purity had finished at Rs 93,000 per 10g. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity plunged by Rs 1,550 to Rs 91,000 per 10g. It had closed at Rs 92,550 per 10g in the previous market close. Continuing the losing streak for the fifth consecutive day. Spot gold fell USD 10.16 or 0.33 per cent to USD 3,027.20 per ounce. *—PTI*

PHOTO:XXX

Rupee falls 38 paise to 85.82 against USD

MUMBAI, 7 APRIL

Indian rupee plunged 38 paise to 85.82 against the US dollar on Monday, marking its steepest decline in over five weeks amid global economic turbulence triggered by escalating tariffs and fears of a slowdown. Despite a drop in crude prices and a weaker dollar, rupee's fall was exacerbated by capital flight from both domestic and foreign investors. Market watchers are closely monitoring the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) three-day monetary policy committee meeting, with interest rate decisions expected on Wednesday. The interbank forex market saw the rupee fluctuate between 85.57 and 85.90. Analysts suggest that ongoing trade tensions could keep the rupee under pressure, although lower crude prices may provide some support. *—PTI*

Kalyan Jewellers posts 37% growth in Q4 FY2024-25

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Kalyan Jewellers on Monday reported a 37 per cent year-on-year increase in consolidated revenue for the fourth quarter of FY2024-25, despite extreme volatility in the gold prices. The company reported a consolidated net revenue of Rs 4,563.72 crore in the same period of the 2023-24 fiscal. India operations saw 39 per cent revenue growth during the March quarter of the fiscal 2024-25, with 21 per cent same-store sales growth, the company said in a regulatory filing. The revenue from the Middle East operation rose 24 per cent, contributing 12 per cent to consolidated revenue. The company said 25 Kalyan showrooms and 14 Candere showrooms were opened during Q4 in India. *—PTI*

Coffee Day Ltd total default at Rs 425.38 cr

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Coffee Day Enterprises Ltd (CDEL) has reported a total default of Rs 425.38 crore on payments of interest and repayment of principal amount on loans from banks, financial institutions and unlisted debt securities as NCDs and NCRPS as on 31 March, 2025. CDEL, which is paring its debts through asset resolution, in a regulatory update, said "the delay in debt servicing is due to liquidity crisis". CDEL has reported a default of Rs 174.83 crore on the payment of the principal amount on loans or revolving facilities like cash credit from banks or financial institutions as of 31 March, 2025. Besides, it has also defaulted in payment of interest of Rs 5.78 crore on the above, CDEL said. After the death of founder and then chairman VG Siddhartha in July 2019, CDEL pared debts through resolution of assets. In February this year, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) had set aside insolvency proceedings against Coffee Day Enterprises. *—PTI*

Metal stocks hit hard; Tata Steel tanks nearly 8%

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Shares of metal firms were hit hard on Monday after US President Donald Trump's tariff hikes and retaliation from China fanned fears that a full-blown trade war will impact economic growth across the globe. The stock of National Aluminium Company Ltd tanked 8.18 per cent, Tata Steel slumped 7.73 per cent, JSW Steel tumbled 7.58 per cent, SAIL dropped 7.06 per cent, and Jindal Steel & Power Ltd lost 6.90 per cent on the BSE. Shares of Vedanta dived 6.90 per cent, Jindal Stainless Ltd declined 6.36 per cent, Hindalco Industries went lower by 6.26 per cent. The BSE metal index dropped 6.22 per cent to 26,680.16. *—PTI*

Tata Motors stocks plunge after JLR halt

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Tata Motors' shares plunged by nearly six per cent on Monday after its subsidiary, Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), halted vehicle shipments from UK to US, aiming to navigate new trading terms following tariff changes. Stock hit a 52-week low, closing down 5.54 per cent at Rs 579.85. Market valuation fell by approximately Rs 12,502

crore to Rs 2,13,463 crore. This decline is mirrored by broader market turmoil, following significant global equity losses amid trade tensions. *—PTI*

Telecom, agri most affected by tariffs

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

India's telecom and agriculture sectors are among the worst-affected sectors by the US President Donald Trump's tariffs, highlighted the data shared by a report of EY. According to the report, telecom sector has been hit with a sharp rise in tariffs -- from zero per cent to 26 per cent

from 9 April, 2025. India's telecom exports to the US stand at USD 6 billion. *—ANI*

WazirX: Zettai awaits court's sanction to recover $230M

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Cryptocurrency platform WazirX parent firm Zettai Pte on Monday said 93 per cent of the users who lost USD 230M in a cyber attack have voted in favour of a proposed restructuring scheme aimed at expediting the recovery of the stolen assets.

Now, Zettai awaits sanction from the Singapore High Court, a step necessary for implementing the scheme, paving the way for the platform to resume operations.

The trading platform has stopped operations since July 2024 following a cyber attack that led to an erosion of over USD 230M assets of its users.

The firm in January this year had got the permission from the Singapore High Court to convene a meeting with creditors (users) to present and conduct a voting on the proposed scheme.

- Zettai Pte on Monday said 93 per cent of the users who lost USD 230M in a cyber attack have voted in favour of a proposed restructuring scheme aimed at expediting the recovery of the stolen assets. Now Zettai awaits sanction from the Singapore High Court.

The company said the voting process was conducted on the Kroll Issuer Services platform from 19 to 28 March, 2025.

A total of 1,41,476 scheme creditors, representing USD 195.65M in approved claims, participated in the voting process. Of those who voted, 93.1 per cent (1,31,659 creditors) supported the restructuring proposal, the statement said.

"This level of support significantly exceeds the statutory voting threshold requirement under Section 210(3AB) of the Companies Act, which requires that at least a majority by count and at least 75 per cent of the total value of claims from creditors present and voting must approve the scheme," it said. *—PTI*

AFTER REPO RATE CUT

RBI starts talks on 25bps rate cut

MUMBAI, 7 APRIL

The Reserve Bank on Monday started its bi-monthly monetary policy review amid expectations of a 25 bps cut in key interest rates in the backdrop of moderating inflation and the need to stimulate growth as Trump tariffs pose severe challenges to the global economy.

The decision of the six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by Governor Sanjay Malhotra will be announced on Wednesday. In February, the MPC slashed the repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25 per cent. It was the first reduction since May 2020 and the first revision after two-and-a-half years.

Experts are of the opinion that RBI's rate-setting panel will announce another rate cut of 25 bps this week.

A research report of the State Bank of India (SBI) said the global growth is likely to face significant headwinds due to non-linear yet intersecting trilemma of trade-related tariff barriers, rapid currency swings and fractured capital flows, with no country being immune to the disruptions.

It further said the trajectory of rate action by central banks, while being accommodative, may remain fuzzy.

"We expect a 25-basis point rate cut in April 2025 policy. Cumulative rate cut over the cycle could be at least 100 basis points, with 2 successive rate cuts over February and April 2025. *—PTI*

IDBI's plea against Zee for insolvency dismissed

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Monday dismissed the plea of IDBI Bank which sought to initiate insolvency proceedings against Zee Entertainment.

A two-member NCLAT bench upheld the order passed by the Mumbai bench of NCLT, which had earlier rejected the private lender's plea to initiate insolvency proceedings against Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL).

However, the appellate tribunal granted liberty to IDBI Bank to move a fresh plea for default outside of the period mentioned in section 10A of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

Section 10A mandates that no application for initiation of the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) can be filed against any debtor by any financial and operational creditor for any default arising on or after 25 March, 2020, for a period of one year.

This special provision was inserted in the IBC by the government to help companies after economic activities had resumed post-lockdown in phases during the Covid pandemic.

IDBI Bank had challenged the NCLT order passed on 19 May, 2023, in which tribunal had set aside its plea, observing that it was barred under Section 10A of IBC.

In its order, the NCLT bench had said that ZEEL, which was the corporate guarantor for the loan availed by Siti Networks -- the principal borrower of IDBI Bank -- has committed a default.

Siti Networks has taken a loan of Rs 150 crore for a working capital facility, and as per the agreement, it has to maintain a Debt Service Reserve Account (DSRA). *—PTI*

Healthcare sector will see 17.2% growth in Q4 FY25

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

A report by Nuvama indicates that the healthcare sector in India is anticipated to achieve a 17.2 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth in EBITDA for the fourth quarter of FY25.

This growth is expected to be primarily supported by an 18.1 per cent increase in hospital revenues and a 9.4 per cent rise in the diagnostics segment.

However, the report also reveals that the overall performance of healthcare companies during this quarter has been disappointing, attributed to a weaker than usual seasonal demand.

Factors such as reduced patient footfall, influenced by a subdued acute season and disruptions from festivals like Mahakumbh, have led to a postponement of diagnostic tests, dampening demand for both hospital and diagnostic services.

In the diagnostics sector, revenue growth is projected to remain slow at 12.6 per cent YoY due to these seasonal disruptions.

Meanwhile, the hospitals within Nuvama's coverage are expected to report a revenue growth of around 12 per cent YoY, with EBITDA growth of 14 per cent YoY, largely driven by volume.

Given this underperformance in Q4, the report cautions that the healthcare players may face potential earning cuts for FY25. *—PTI*

boAt owner files draft IPO via private route

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Imagine Marketing, the parent company of wearables brand boAt, has filed draft papers with the markets regulator Sebi for an initial public offering (IPO) through a confidential pre-filing route. The confidential pre-filing route allows the company to withhold public disclosure of details under the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) until later stages.

In a public notice issued on Monday, Imagine Marketing said it has "filed the Pre-filed Draft Red Herring Prospectus with Sebi and stock exchanges under the ... ICDR Regulations in relation to the proposed IPO of its equity shares on the mainboard of the stock. exchanges". However, it clarified that pre-filing DRHP does not guarantee the company will go ahead with the maiden public offering. This marks the company's second attempt to go public. Previously, the company had filed draft papers in January 2022 for floating a Rs 2,000-crore IPO. This comprised a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 900 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) aggregating up to Rs 1,100 crore.

Aman Gupta and Sameer Mehta *PHOTO: X*

Established in 2013 by Aman Gupta and Sameer Mehta, Imagine Marketing offers a product portfolio ranging from audio gear and smart wearables to personal grooming products and mobile accessories. *—PTI*

Indian startups: boAt Co-founder backs Goyal

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Consumer electronics firm boAt's co-founder Aman Gupta has backed Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on the need for Indian startups to aim higher and start working on bigger solutions. Drawing a parallel with China, the Union minister on Thursday said Indian startups are working on food delivery apps while Chinese counterparts are working on electric mobility, battery technology, and other future technologies.

Goyal supplemented that he had no issue with the startups working on food delivery services but he wants to see more entrepreneurs work on serious problem-solving. *—ANI*

TWO QUARTERS IN A ROW

Inflation may stay below 4% till Q3

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The inflation in India may remain below four per cent in the first half of the financial year 2025-26 (FY26), said a report by State Bank of India (SBI).

This could be the first time inflation stays below four per cent for two quarters in a row in recent years.

The report said, "US has imposed reciprocal tariffs to many economies that is more than India's....This will increase the fear of dumping into India by these countries, resulting in lower inflation."

It noted that the consumer price index inflation is expected to fall to 3.8 per cent in the fourth quarter of FY25.

For the full year FY25, average inflation may be around 4.6 per cent.

SBI expects inflation to come down to 3.9-4.0 per cent in FY26. Core inflation, which excludes food and fuel prices, is likely to stay in the range of 4.2-4.3 per cent.

- SBI expects inflation to come down to 3.9-4.0 per cent in FY26. Core inflation, is likely to stay in the range of 4.2-4.3 per cent.

The report also said that headline inflation will continue to move downwards till September or October 2025. After that, there is a possibility it may rise again.

It also pointed out a global factor that could impact India's inflation. US has imposed reciprocal tariffs on several countries, these are higher than the ones India has placed. As a result, there is a fear that other countries may start dumping their goods in India at cheaper prices.

This could lead to a further drop in inflation levels in the country. *—PTI*

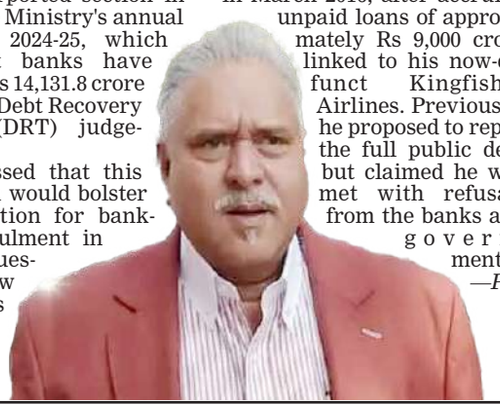
Mallya claims banks recovered over 14K cr

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Fugitive liquor baron Vijay Mallya has asserted that Indian banks have successfully gained access to his properties worth Rs 14,131.6 crore, significantly exceeding the Rs 6,203 crore he owes to public sector banks. Mallya referenced a purported section in the Finance Ministry's annual report for 2024-25, which states that banks have recovered Rs 14,131.8 crore against the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) judgement.

He expressed that this information would bolster his application for bankruptcy annulment in the UK, questioning how banks would respond in an English court. The report highlighted that 44 extradition requests have been sent regarding 36 individuals, including Mallya.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has successfully facilitated extraditions of several high-profile economic offenders to India, according to the report. Mallya fled to the UK in March 2016, after accruing unpaid loans of approximately Rs 9,000 crore linked to his now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines. Previously, he proposed to repay the full public debt but claimed he was met with refusals from the banks and government. *—PTI*



Djokovic to shine at Laureus World Sports Awards

MADRID, 7 APRIL

Twenty-four-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic will be the star attraction at the Laureus World Sports Awards, celebrating its 25th anniversary in the Spanish capital. For the second consecutive year, the iconic Palacio de Cibeles will host the event on 21 April. Djokovic, a five-time Laureus World Sportsman of the Year, expressed his excitement: "It is thrilling to return to Madrid to celebrate this milestone. I have fond memories of winning my fifth Laureus here last year." Other sporting legends confirmed to attend include Djokovic's former coach Boris Becker, football icons Cafu, Luis Figo, and Ruud Gullit, as well as gymnastics pioneer Nadia Comaneci, rugby star Bryan Habana, and cricket legend Steve Waugh among others. *—PTI*

PHOTO:PTI

Cabrera triumphs on PGA tour after release from prison

BOCA RATON, 7 APRIL

Angel Cabrera clinched victory at the PGA Tour Champions on Sunday, marking his return to competitive golf 20 months after being released from an Argentine prison for gender violence. The 55-year-old, renowned for his 2007 US Open and 2009 Masters wins, secured the inaugural James Hardie Pro Football Hall of Fame Invitational with a late birdie, finishing at 1-under 71. Cabrera had been imprisoned for threats and harassment against two ex-girlfriends, serving over two years before his parole in August 2023. In a reflective interview post-release, he expressed remorse for his actions, seeking forgiveness from his ex-partners. *—PTI*

Marseille's 3-2 win over Toulouse secures 2nd place

PARIS, 7 APRIL

In a thrilling encounter, Marseille triumphed 3-2 over Toulouse on Sunday, with Adrien Rabiot scoring a volley and assisting another goal. The win allowed Marseille to reclaim second place in Ligue 1, two points ahead of Monaco and three points clear of Strasbourg, as they vie for a Champions League spot. After a string of three losses, Marseille's victory was a much-needed boost for coach Roberto De Zerbi. Rabiot set up a clumsy own goal by Gabriel Suazo before Mason Greenwood and Rabiot both found the net. Toulouse managed a late goal, but Marseille held firm. Meanwhile, Strasbourg's Liam Rosenior enjoyed success with a 1-0 win against Reims, while rock-bottom Montpellier's relegation worries deepened with a defeat to Le Havre. *—PTI*

Nuamah ruled out of Champions League matches

LYON, 7 APRIL

Lyon's hopes of qualifying for the Champions League have been dealt a blow with the news that Ernest Nuamah won't play again this season due to a serious knee injury. The seven-time French champions said on Monday that the Ghanaian winger ruptured the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee during Lyon's 2-1 win over Lille in the French league over the weekend. With six matches left to play, Lyon sits in fifth place in the standings, two points behind third place Monaco. The top three teams qualify for the Champions League group stage. Lyon was already deprived of injured Malick Fofana. *—PTI*

Dhoni tilts scale as CSK faces Punjab

With 3 defeats in a row, this is Chennai team's worst start to an IPL season

MULLANPUR, 7 APRIL

The distinct lack of firepower in Mahendra Singh Dhoni's death overs batting is a sensitive area that Chennai Super Kings need to address ahead of their IPL clash against Punjab Kings here on Tuesday.

In one of their worst starts to an IPL season, CSK have now completed a hat-trick of defeats, all while chasing.

While Punjab Kings lost their previous game against Rajasthan Royals at home but on current form as well as on paper, Shreyas Iyer's side looks more well-rounded than CSK who are grappling with combination problems.

Dhoni's presence at the backend, which once was considered a boon, is turning into bane for the 'Yellow Brigade'.

But such is the aura of the man playing his 18th IPL season (only one apart from Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma), that no one in the CSK ranks can probably walk up to the man and show him the mirror.

While 'Brand Dhoni' still rules the hearts of CSK aficionados and cheer is deafening when he enters the turf, the game against Delhi Capitals was certainly an awakening for his supporters that there is more to a team than their 'Beloved Thala' and probably it's time to move on.

The opposition teams now expect to bat first and somehow score anything above 180 knowing that it would be an uphill task for CSK unless Shivam Dube fires.

Now Dube is a muscular hit and miss kind of a player and odds of his success with his template will always be 50-50.

Dhoni's greatness in all these years has been his immaculate sense of timing whether it is bidding adieu to captaincy or retiring from international game. Will he decide himself once again or wait for the nudge?

"No, that's not my role to put an end to it. I have no idea. I'm just enjoying working with him. He's still going strong. I don't even ask these days. You guys are the ones that ask (about retirement)," head coach Stephen Fleming's helplessness was evident after the 25-run loss to DC. *—PTI*

Chennai Super Kings squad arrives in Mullanpur PHOTO: X/CSK

> I have 10 months to decide whether I want to play one more year, and it's not for me to decide as it is my body that decides whether I can play or not
>
> —MS Dhoni, CSK player

Narine faces 'clone' Rathi in high-stakes IPL clash

KOLKATA, 7 APRIL

Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) will host Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) at Eden Gardens on Tuesday in a crucial IPL 2025 encounter, with both teams tied on four points after four matches.

KKR has had a mixed season so far. After early losses to Royal Challengers Bangalore and Mumbai Indians, they bounced back with a commanding win over Sunrisers Hyderabad. Key contributions from Venkatesh Iyer, Rinku Singh, and Ajinkya Rahane revitalised the middle order, though the opening partnership remains a concern. Sunil Narine and Quinton de Kock have struggled for consistency, with their highest stand only 44 runs.

A key subplot of the match will be the battle between Narine and LSG's rookie sensation, Digvesh Rathi, who has modelled his game after the West Indian. Rathi, known for his 'notebook' celebration and impressive bowling, will look to outshine his mentor. However, he is under scrutiny for controversial on-field conduct and risks suspension due to demerit points.

LSG, coming off a win over Mumbai, faces growing pressure on skipper Rishabh Pant, who has struggled despite his hefty INR 27 crore price tag. Pant's form could be crucial as LSG seeks to continue their momentum. *—PTI*

Ishant fined 25% of match fees for breach of conduct

Hyderabad, 7 April

Gujarat Titans pacer Ishant Sharma has been fined 25 per cent of his match fees besides accumulating a demerit point for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during the game against Sunrisers Hyderabad on Sunday night. "Ishant Sharma admitted to the Level-1 offence under Article 2.2 and accepted the Match Referee's sanction," said the IPL in a statement.

Article 2.2 of IPL's Code of Conduct relates to "abuse of cricket equipment or clothing, ground equipment or fixtures and fittings during a match". *—PTI*

MATCH TIMINGS

KKR vs LSG Match starts at **3.30 pm IST**

CSK vs PKS Match starts at **7.30 pm IST**

RECOVERY ATTEMPT

The championships will commence in Ningbo on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

Top Indian shuttlers eye Badminton Asia Championships

NINGBO, 7 APRIL

India's top shuttlers, including Lakshya Sen, HS Prannoy and two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu, will try to overcome their string of below-par performances this season when the opening-round matches in the Badminton Asia Championships commence here on Tuesday.

Besides the two top-ranked Indian men's singles players in the world, Prannoy (17th) and Sen (18th), Kiran George (34th) and Priyanshu Rajawat (35th) will aim to put up a good show, while in women's singles, Sindhu, whose world ranking has dropped to 17th, will hope to recover her form in the continental event.

The other Indians in the fray, the young Malvika Bansod (23rd), Anupama Upadhyaya (43rd) and Aakarshi Kashyap (48th), will be keen to make an impact in an extremely tough field.

Sen, a bronze medallist at the 2021 World Championships, will open his campaign against Chinese Taipei's Lee Chia-Hao, a finalist at the All England Championships early this month, in the USD 500,000 tournament.

Prannoy, who hasn't been at his best since suffering a bout of Chikengunya, will face China's Guang Zu Lu in his first match. Priyanshu Rajawat has been drawn against Thailand's Kantaphon Wangcharoen, while Kiran George will face a qualifier.

In the women's singles, two-time Olympic medallist Sindhu will begin her campaign against world No. 34 Ester Nurumi Tri Wardoyo of Indonesia, while her compatriots face stiffer challenges.

Anupama will take on Thailand's former world champion Ratchanok Intanon, seeded eighth, while Malvika has been drawn against China's Fang Jie Gao. Aakarshi Kashyap faces second seed Yue Han of China. *—PTI*

Brook named England's white ball captain

LONDON, 7 APRIL

Harry Brook was on Monday appointed England white-ball captain following Jos Buttler's exit from the role after a poor ICC Champions Trophy campaign last month.

Brook, who was signed up by Delhi Capitals during last year's auction, had withdrawn from the IPL 2025 to focus on his England career, and was subsequently slapped with a two-year ban from playing in the league.

The 26-year-old has been a key part of England's white-ball set-up since making his debut in January 2022, and has spent the past year as the vice-captain in both ODIs and T20Is.

He also led England in the ODI series against Australia last September in Buttler's absence.

Brook, a former Young Lions and the England's captain in the ICC Under-19 World Cup in New Zealand, so far has played 26 ODIs scoring 816 runs at an average of 34.00, with a top score of 110.

In T20s, he has earned 44 caps and a highest score of 81 and was part of the team that won the ICC T20 World Cup in 2022. Rob Key, Managing Director of England Men's Cricket, added: "He's been part of our succession planning for some time, albeit this opportunity has come slightly earlier than expected."

England will begin their 2025 white-ball campaign at the end of May with a home series against the West Indies, featuring three ODIs and as many T20Is. *—PTI*

Harry Brook PHOTO: PTI

Messi scores for Inter Miami in 1-1 MLS tie

FORT LAUDERDALE, 7 APRIL

Lionel Messi scored his third goal in four Major League Soccer matches this season, securing a 1-1 draw for Inter Miami against Toronto FC. This marked Messi's 40th goal in all competitions since joining the club, extending his franchise record.

The Argentine superstar netted his goal through a left-footed volley from the edge of the 18-yard box just five minutes into first-half stoppage time, equalising after Federico Bernardeschi had given Toronto the lead three minutes earlier. Notably, Messi had an earlier goal disallowed for a foul committed shortly before scoring.

The draw leaves Inter Miami at 4-0-2 for the season, just one point behind Columbus in the Eastern Conference, despite having a match in hand. The tie represents only the second time this season that Toronto has held a lead, the first taking place during a brief 19-minute period against Chicago last month.

Messi has recorded at least one point in all four of his appearances this season. *—PTI*

Liverpool suffers fall; Southampton relegated

MANCHESTER, 7 APRIL

Liverpool suffered a surprising 3-2 defeat at Fulham on Sunday, damaging their pursuit of a record-equaling 20th Premier League title. The loss came after they had taken the lead through Alexis Mac Allister's goal in the 14th minute, but Fulham's Ryan Sessegnon, Alex Iwobi, and Rodrigo Muniz struck three times in a 14-minute blitz to put the hosts ahead by halftime. Despite Luis Diaz scoring in the second half, Liverpool couldn't recover, leaving them 11 points clear of second-placed Arsenal.

At the other end of the table, Southampton's relegation was confirmed following a 3-1 defeat to Tottenham, marking them as the first team to fall from the top flight this season with seven matches still to play. Manager Ivan Juric expressed disappointment, calling it a "big school" for all involved in the club.

In a lacklustre Manchester derby, Manchester United and Manchester City played to a goalless draw at Old Trafford. Both clubs face uncertain futures, with the prospect of missing out on Champions League football looming large.

City manager Pep Guardiola condemned the offensive chants aimed at Phil Foden from the United fans, while United fans staged a protest against the Glazer family's ownership post-match. Chelsea remains fourth, also drawing 0-0 at Brentford. *—PTI*

GENDER PARITY

Charleston Open to equalise prize money for women and men

CHARLESTON, 7 APRIL

- The prize purse for the 2025 Charleston Open is set at $1.06 million, with expectations to rise by approximately $1.15M in 2026, aligning with the men's event that typically exceeds $2M

The Charleston Open has confirmed an extension of its title partnership with Credit One Bank until 2031, alongside an announcement that starting in 2026, both female and male competitors will receive equal prize money. The agreement was disclosed on the final day of this year's tournament.

As a WTA-500 level event, the Charleston Open will align its prize money with that of the men's ATP-500 level event. This decision makes it the first standalone WTA 500 tournament to increase prize money ahead of the 2033 target set for all weeklong WTA 1000 and 500 events to ensure equal payment for male and female athletes.

Amber Greenwalt, senior vice president of brand and advertising at Credit One Bank, highlighted the tournament's legacy of empowerment that dates back to 1973. Notably, the Charleston Open was the first tournament to offer women a $100,000 prize fund in 1973, and the inaugural champion, Rosie Casals, received a cheque for $30,000 – a record payout for women at the time.

"This commitment reflects our dedication to advancing equity both on and off the court," stated Greenwalt.

The prize purse for the 2025 Charleston Open is set at $1.06 million, with expectations to rise by approximately $1.15M in 2026, aligning with the men's event that typically exceeds $2M.

Tournament owner Ben Navarro expressed pride in this move, stating it underscores their commitment to recognising the efforts of athletes and inspiring the next generation. The nine-day event marks the opening of the clay season for the WTA Tour, featuring a main draw of 48 players. *—PTI*

The Charleston Open was the first tournament to offer women a $100,000 prize fund in 1973 PHOTO: AP